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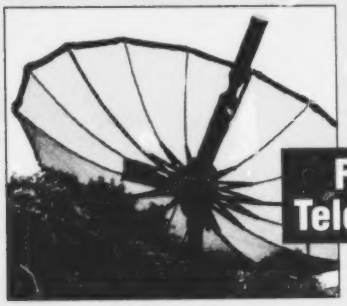

Focus: Emergency Telecommunications

Relief Operations Around the World
Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies

UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

NATIONS UNIES
DEPARTEMENT DES AFFAIRES HUMANITAIRES

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DEPARTAMENTO DE ASUNTOS HUMANITARIOS

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INTERVIEW

MARTIN GRIFFITHS

Just four weeks after taking up the position of DHA Director in Geneva, Martin Griffiths brought together his staff and shared his views on challenges to be faced and expectations to be fulfilled. In an interview which he gave to DHA News a few days later, Mr. Griffiths emphasized the vital role of information and communication, and explained why he would not tolerate the failure to engage, stressing that the obligation of the Department as a whole is to make sure that all the voices of experience are heard in a way that's best for the victims of crises.

Q: ***Why did you decide to take the job?***

I have always been very interested in the issue of how best agencies and donors can work together to make response to crises really effective, at a policy level and at an operational level. I have had operational experience both in the UN and NGOs but you always get frustrated by the fact that at the level of coordination the system doesn't work as well as it could do. So really this was just an opportunity to use perhaps some of that experience and contribute to make that process better. I've followed DHA since its inception, and UNDRO before. I think it has an exceptional task and **our obligation is to make sure that all the voices of experience are heard in a way that's best for the victims of crises**. That's a fantastic challenge and a wonderful opportunity.

Q: ***Now that you're with DHA, within DHA as our Director in Geneva, could you tell us, even if you have taken your job but a month ago, what is your vision for DHA? You did stress the necessity to see the Department as a whole but the split image of DHA Geneva and DHA New York still sticks to us. How can we get rid of it?***

I think there are two things, two ways in which we need to bring DHA really together, as a single whole working on a single mission. And the mission is clear. It is indeed a single mission. Firstly, we need to make sure that DHA Geneva and DHA New York work together, speak with one voice. That's the only way in which we can maximize our effectiveness.

Experience tells us that if we are to have the kind of humanitarian influence that is needed we have to be strong in New York. We have to be able to have good resources in New York to make sure that that voice is well supported, well defined, well protected. That means, for us here in Geneva, that we have an absolute obligation to ensure that the experiences that are available here in Europe from the operational agencies and the donors are conveyed clearly, succinctly to New York so that they can reinforce the work our colleagues do over there. We are in a single organization. Many organizations have offices in different places and certainly all the ones that I have worked for. **It's not difficult to achieve synergy instead of division.** That's the first objective.

The second objective of course is to make sure that our work on complex emergencies, our work on natural disasters and mitigation, also is part of a single whole. There are obvious lessons to be learned from natural disasters for complex emergencies. We recently had a lot of discussions about how the military and civil defence assets that we've been deploying for natural disasters can be used in complex emergencies. Of course they can! The UNDAC team was used in Rwanda, so we've got to make sure that again we use the talents and experience that we have for one greater goal. And I think finally we've got to ensure that everybody in DHA realizes they're working for one organization.

They're not working for DHA Geneva, they're not working for DHA Kigali, they're not working for DHA New York. They're working for one organization. I've had some experience of that in the past. You don't work for the NGO in India or the NGO in Spain or in the UK. You work for that one organization. I think things are slowly improving. One of the things we have to do to achieve that is to make sure that, to the extent possible, we give our staff a certain amount of security of contracts so that they are able to give the sort of commitment that they do have and that they can actually see a future for themselves in the organization. **DHA is here to stay and I obviously hope that the staff will stay with it.**

Q: ***At the meeting with the staff, you said: "I will not tolerate the failure to engage"***

That's right. Yes, that's exactly it! If DHA provides people the opportunity to really contribute to the mission that I was speaking about earlier, then equally we, the people in DHA, are required to engage with that. Absolutely and unequivocally. Several people told me, since I arrived in this town, people outside DHA, that the commitment, the long hours the staff put in, is truly exceptional. But we have to reward that. Partly through proper contracts and proper conditions. But also through the fact that each one of us needs to know precisely what the whole organization is doing. This is why the other day at that meeting I said we had to be proud of the work of people in another part of the organization. People in Geneva should be proud of what's happening in New York, should be proud of what's happening in Islamabad, in Kigali, and vice versa and that does not always happen. But it is an absolutely clear objective.

Q: ***Do people who work here in Geneva really know all that's happening in Islamabad, for instance? Except for all the reports we read or don't read, because there's a lot of paper ... as you know ... and not all of us have the opportunity to be working in the field. Isn't there a risk when we are so far in such peaceful surroundings, that we forget what we are here for?***

Yes I think it is very easy to forget that and to confuse the important and the urgent. It is very easy to forget really what we are here for, which is to help people who are suffering, the victims of crises. The only way to get that across is to be sure that we do have good information flow between the different parts of the Department and, secondly, to back that up with exploiting all the opportunities there are for good staff briefings on what is happening. So, for example, if we have a visit from somebody in UNREO let's make sure that he or she actually speaks to the staff about what's going on; if we have a visit from a colleague in New York, I am sure we will all wish to know precisely what's happening there too. When one of John Tomblin's people comes back from Latin America, let's find out what's happening in mitigation. Let's learn not just about the immediate issues in complex emergencies, but make sure we are all aware of the steady long-term tasks in which DHA is involved.

The only way, and we all know it very well, to make a team is by forging an identity, and that can only be achieved through information, through discussions, through contributions from all parts of the organization. I have had many experiences, in the past, of people who were apparently completely unrelated to a particular activity yet had very good ideas to contribute. And if there is an opportunity for them to contribute, they feel empowered by it and they feel pride in it. To the extent that we can in terms of efficiency, I think we should do that.

Q: ***Could you say a few words about coordination and about inter-agency co-operation?***

On coordination, **coordination the DHA way is all about clarity of role, clarity as to who is going to do what. And then monitoring that performance and pointing out where it is defective, and where it is successful.** It is no more and no less than that. Clearly it becomes very complicated in operational circumstances but when you boil it down that's what it is. What DHA then has to take from that is what do we learn from that experience, from that allocation of tasks ? What can we learn which we particularly have the responsibility to take further, whether it is with the Department of Political Affairs or the Secretary-General directly. It is to make clear what the tasks are through discussion, monitor that performance and then draw from that experience to enhance that performance. That's what coordination is. It's not intellectually very complicated although operationally often very difficult.

On inter-agency cooperation, I think the only way in which we can continue to improve the kind of inter-agency cooperation that exists already, and there have been huge improvements over the past few years, is to be sure that when we are talking to the agencies we're not in the business of fighting any turf battles. What we are doing is simply seeking the best solution for all those involved. That's our role. And to provide leadership through Peter Hansen. When I had my first curtesy call on UNHCR, with Peter Hansen, they said to him that UNHCR feels that DHA should be more assertive. I think that's right, but assertive on the basis of a common understanding and common experience. **That is never going to be easy but that is our mandate, our task. To provide humanitarian leadership based on the experience of all the actors.**

Q: ***A few questions about Martin Griffiths, "the man". You were only 23 when you worked as a volunteer for UNICEF in Viet Nam and Laos. Since then, you have been very actively involved in the humanitarian field, quite often for children, such as was the case with UNICEF, the Save the Children Fund. Before your appointment to this post, you were Chief Executive of Actionaid. You majored in Philosophy and Religion as well as in Oriental and African Studies. You also studied Law. Is there a link between your studies and the path you followed or is it just life?***

Yes, I think there is. Because if you study philosophy and religion, what you're looking at is a moral base, an ethical base, for action on behalf of those who were less priviliged than yourself, and I think I have had quite a privileged background. We all have, in this part of the world. Therefore, it was something that was always interesting to me and important, morally important, to work in this way and do these sorts of things which I have been very lucky to be able to do. I think I have been very lucky because it becomes increasingly difficult for people to be able to enter into this field. But it was much easier when I began. So, yes, the basic studies do relate to it. I don't think Law does particularly but Law gave me an opportunity for analysis, to have an analytic framework.

In this field, not just in the humanitarian operations but in development and so forth, we must be motivated by basic values, values of respect for individuals and that's what both experiences teach us that is important. I am not saying for one minute that I am particularly good at those things but it is clear that without a basic reference to values you inevitably lose your way. Also, my father, when I was growing up, was a businessman working abroad so I was always exposed to foreign countries and got the taste for it, for working in an international environment.

Q: ***At the end of the meeting the other day, you said to the staff: "I am exhausted but very optimistic" ...***

I have to be!

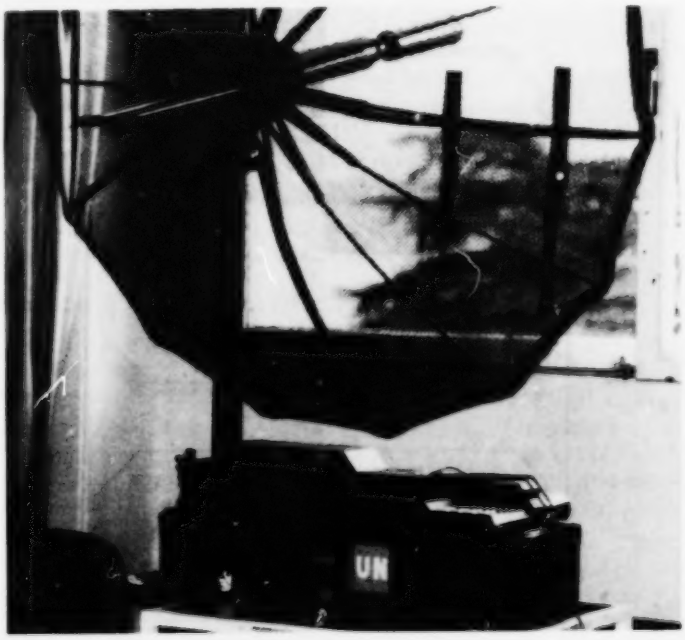
Geneva, 23 November 1994

Towards the Unrestricted Use of Telecommunications Facilities Before, During and After an Emergency

If anywhere on the ocean a vessel with a crew of one is in distress, all related communications have absolute priority and are free of charge. This is stipulated in some 50 international regulatory instruments, from Article 46 of the Constitution of the International Telecommunication Union all the way to number 2934A, Article 37 in Chapter IX of the Radio Regulations. The necessity for absolute priority of distress signals has been recognized worldwide since the 14th of April 1912, when the "Titanic" hit an iceberg.

However when, after an earthquake, some 10,000 persons are trapped under the debris of buildings and hous2es, any customs official can prevent the arriving rescue teams from outside the affected country from entering this country with walkie-talkies. And another official might easily prevent the teams from using their communications equipment, unless they first obtain a licence from a national telecommunications authority whose building may just have collapsed in the earthquake. Also, if a team is, by chance, nevertheless able to use its satellite terminal, they are three months later presented with telephone bills for tens of thousands of dollars. Such is the sad experience of those who provide international humanitarian assistance in the age of information super highways.

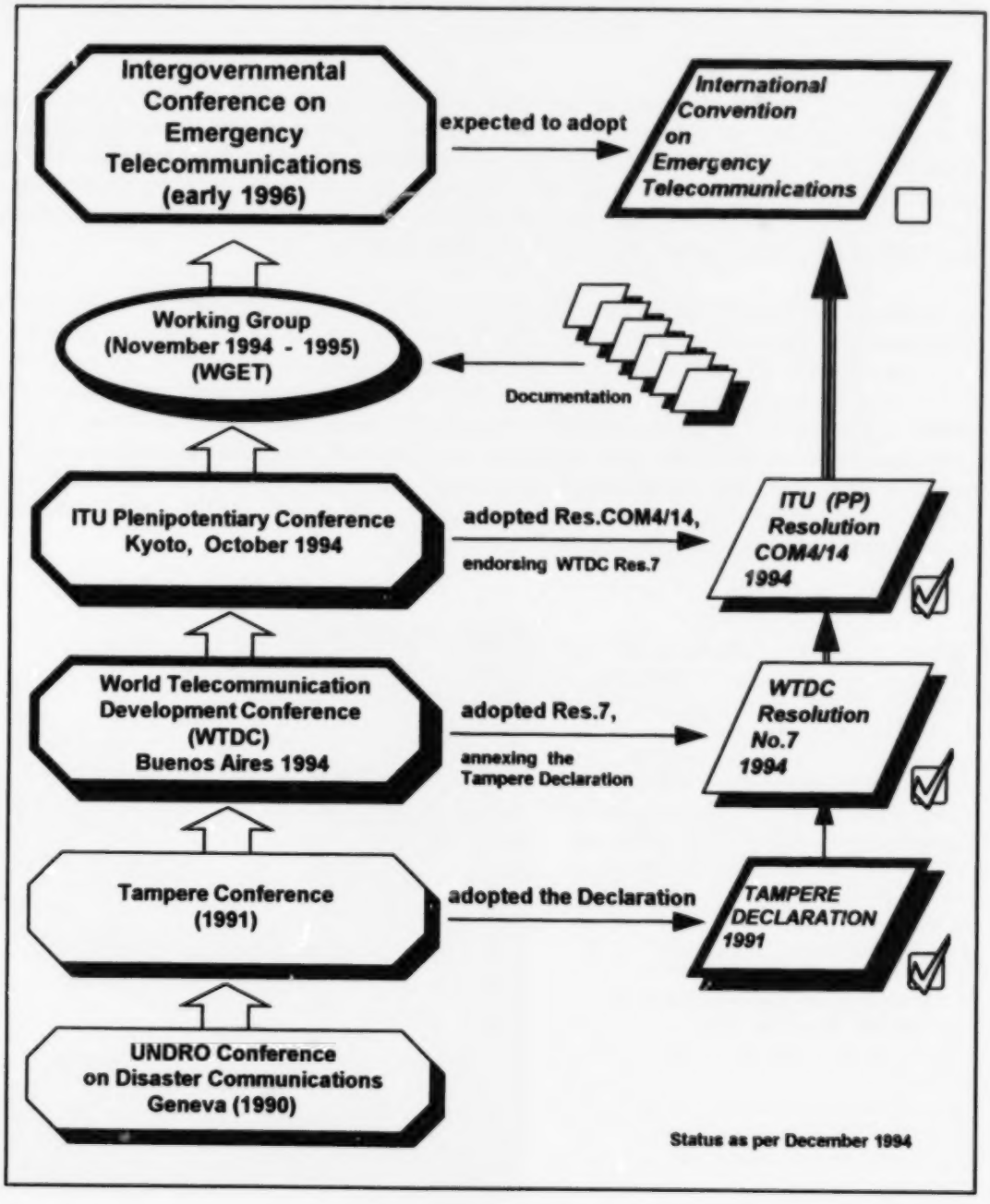
This was, in brief, what led to the formulation of the *Tampere Declaration* in 1991. The problems encountered in 1994 are no different. Some progress however has been made since 1992: In March 1994 the *World Telecommunications Development Conference (WTDC)* of the *International Telecommunications Union (ITU)* in Buenos Aires made the Tampere Declaration an integral part of its *Resolution No.7 on Disaster Communications*. A resolution is still not a convention, but it is a milestone on the way to such a binding international legal instrument. A first step was made on "the way ahead", to quote the title of the last chapter of the Tampere Declaration, and Resolution No.7 has drawn a map for the continuation of the way. *(see diagram: The Way from the Tampere Declaration to the Convention on Emergency Telecommunications.)*



In October 1994, the Plenipotentiary Conference of the ITU in Kyoto adopted *Resolution COM 4/14 on Telecommunications for Disaster Mitigation and Disaster Relief Operations*, endorsing the WTDC Resolution.

The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), as the successor to the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), has been invited in these resolutions to work closely with the ITU and all other interested

From the Tampere Declaration to a Convention on Emergency Telecommunications


Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications (early 1996)
expected to adopt
International Convention on Emergency Telecommunications
Working Group (November 1994 - 1995) (WGET)
Documentation
ITU Plenipotentiary Conference Kyoto, October 1994
adopted Res.COM4/14,
endorsing WTDC Res.7
ITU (PP) Resolution COM4/14 1994
World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) Buenos Aires 1994
adopted Res.7,
annexing the Tampere Declaration
WTDC Resolution No.7 1994
Tampere Conference (1991)
adopted the Declaration
TAMPERE DECLARATION 1991
UNDRO Conference on Disaster Communications Geneva (1990)
Status as per December 1994

partners towards the further development of Disaster Communications. The *Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications* has been convened by DHA in order to encourage the participation of all those who have an active interest in the problems described in the Tampere Declaration. In particular, it will initiate preparations for *an Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications*, which should be held in 1996, as requested in the Resolution of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference.

The final step, the ratification of a *Convention on Emergency Telecommunications*, would finally enable all the international, governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions providing humanitarian assistance, to make full use of the wonderful tools the telecommunications industry has put at our disposal.

Disaster Relief is good - Disaster Prevention is better and, where no prevention is possible, preparedness can reduce the painful consequences of a disaster. Within the framework of the *International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)*, the development and maintenance of appropriate communications systems are an integral part of Resolution No.7, and the title of the resolution of the plenipotentiary conference - *Communications for Disaster Mitigation and Disaster Relief Operations* - emphasizes this. As recent events such as cyclone Hollanda on the Island of Mauritius showed, the increasing use of modern technology leads to an increasing vulnerability of the communications infrastructure.

Providing the regulatory framework for the full use and the encouragement of decentralized means of communications, in particular the amateur radio services and land-mobile satellite terminals, must be an important aim of the future Convention on Disaster Communications.

The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs would be among those whose work will be facilitated: Under the now fully implemented concepts of the *United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination (UNDAC) Teams* and the *On-site Operations Co-ordination Center (OSOCC)*, a disaster communications system has been established and used many times during the past two years, most recently in Rwanda.

Inmarsat Standard M Satellite Terminal

Corresponding to the three levels of coordination of international humanitarian assistance, the DHA network first links the relief teams among each other and with the OSOCC at the local level. It also connects this center to the *Disaster Management Team* (DMT) in the capital. It finally provides reliable links with the "outside world". The necessary equipment for all these tasks is ready for dispatch from the DHA office in Geneva to anywhere in the world within a few hours after the occurrence of a disaster. Information provided through these links with the field is one of the major inputs into the DHA information systems.

We have the tools. What remains to do now is to join our forces in the work towards a regulatory environment, which allows the unrestricted use of telecommunications facilities in the pursuit of our common aim: The prevention and alleviation of human suffering caused by disasters.

Hans Zimmermann

DHA Establishes Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications

Today's technology provides the necessary equipment for reliable communications with and in the field during emergencies. It also permits an increased effectiveness of early warning measures. However, regulatory restrictions and high communications fees still hamper their practical use. This has been stated by conferences on disaster communications in 1990 and 1991, and recognized in the World Telecommunication Development Conference Resolution No. 7 and PP-94 Resolution COM 4/14 of the ITU.

In order to tackle the two related issues of regulations and costs, DHA embarked on a two-pronged approach. On the one hand and thanks to contributions from the Government of Switzerland, DHA has completed research, with the assistance of a consultant, on all international and selected national regulations of emergency telecommunications. This corresponds to the first phase of inplementation of the mandate given by ITU resolutions. On the other hand, given the interorganizational nature of the work to be undertaken, DHA convened on 16 November in Geneva a working group on emergency telecommunications in the context of humanitarian assistance.

The meeting, attended by 41 delegates from UN agencies, NGOs and national relief organizations, first reviewed the possible use during emergencies of existing telecommunications structures such as the UN Backbone and Thin Route Networks. Given recent technological developments, such as easy accessibility to world-wide networks such as INTERNET or the rapid progress of instruments such as CD-ROMS, the meeting came to the conclusion that a working group of interested entities on emergency information systems should be set up, so as to permit exchange of information on plans and capacities for each entity and introduce useful and cost effective cooperation between all concerned. DHA undertook to convene such a group early in 1995.

Having defined the interface between telecommunications and information systems, the meeting then addressed the more focused issue of emergency telecommunications with and in the field, and defined the framework (see matrix) within which emergency telecommunications in the strict sense are working as well as the "way forward" towards an intergovernmental conference for the adoption of a binding legal instrument on telecommunications for disaster mitigation and response.

A core working group has been set up to prepare the next meeting, scheduled for February 1995 and including a broad scope of participants from UN agencies, national and international NGOs as well as representatives from the commercial and the academic sector. The members of the working group are linked through a dedicated computer network provided by the ITU. The first edition of the register of documents and of the annotated bibliography on emergency telecommunications as well as related documents are available from DHA as hard copy, on diskette and in the near future on the network. The success of the work will largely depend on the support from all interested parties, on contributions of information to the on-going research as well as towards the further funding of the project.

The summary minutes and copies of the documentation are available upon request.

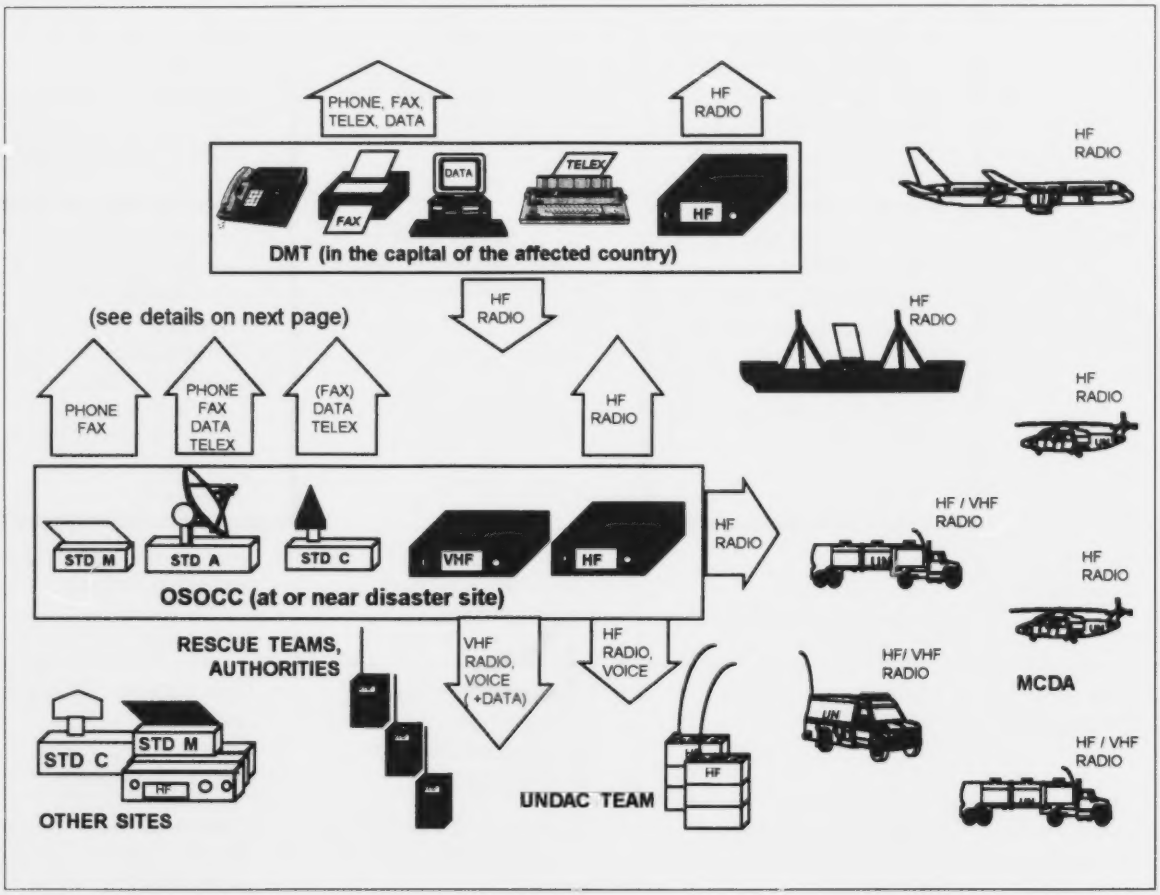
Matrix

of the Main Elements of Emergency Communications and Information

	MITIGATION (PRE-DISASTER)	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (PERMANENT)	RESPONSE (POST DISASTER)
Public Networks	• Information Exchange • Survival and recovery capability of networks	• Routine Telecommunications (Phone, fax, telex, data) • Access to data networks	• International links • Local / regional links (if available) • Distribution of reports
Satellite Telecom-munication	• Local / regional data collection, data transmission for remote sensing	• UN Backbone Network • UN Thin-Route Network • Permanent digital links	• International links from disaster site • Backup for regional and international links • Transition from initial response to Thin Route Network links
HF & VHF Radio Com-munication	• De-centralized means of telecommunication with high survival capability • Frequency allocations for humanitarian needs	• Interface between emergency telecommunications and routine systems	• Regional and local emergency telecommunications links • Backup for international links
Regulatory and political Issues	• Facilitation of the use of de-centralized means of telecommunications and of data collection links • Collaboration with IDNDR projects containing telecommuni-cations elements	• Licensing of land stations for UN backbone network and connections to public networks	• Transborder use of emergency tele-communications equipment • Facilitation of emergency tele-communications for NGOs including their participation in UN networks
Satellite Observation	• Monitoring • Early Warning • Scientific applications (research)	• Access to and maintenance of data bases / images	• Post-disaster data (high resolution images), • Future real-time information
Data Processing	• Maintenance of data bases • Linking of data bases	• Access to data bases • Humanitarian Information Management Systems and Networks	• Data collection in the field • Access to HQS and outside data bases
Public Information and Media	• Creation and upkeep of public awareness • Education • IDNDR promotional activities	• PR work of UN and other humanitarian institutions • Publications	• Information from media (Monitoring) • Information to media (on field level)

DHA On-Site Operations Coordination Center: An Example of Emergency Telecommunications With and In the Field

Natural disasters inevitably disrupt normal telecommunications: hurricanes destroy telephone lines and antenna masts, earthquakes and landslides break underground cables and interrupt electricity, floods inundate telephone exchanges. Droughts, while not normally damaging the infrastructure, are likely to occur in regions with insufficient telecommunications infrastructure even in normal times, and so do most complex emergencies. Humanitarian assistance consequently depends on independent emergency telecommunications facilities, and the United Nations agencies as well as national and international non-governmental organizations have to provide their own communications links.

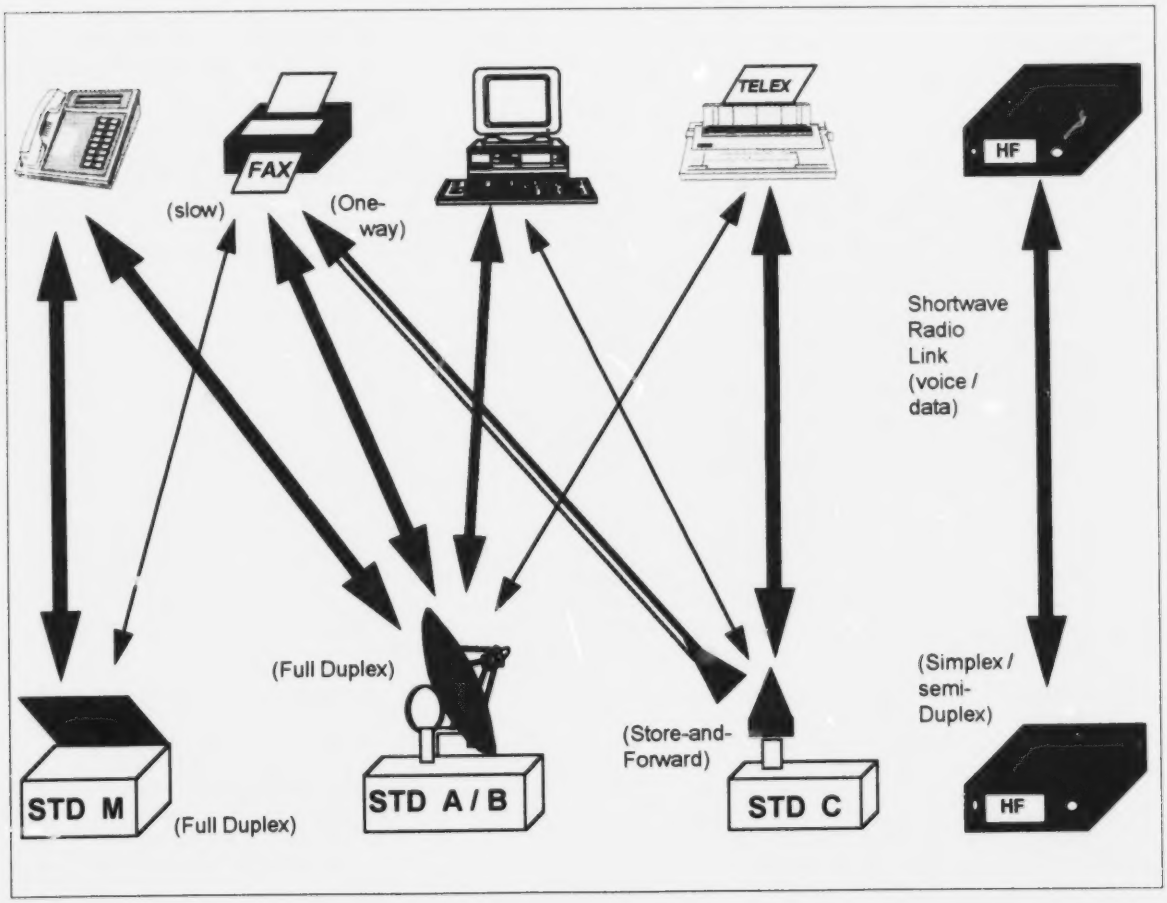


The diagrams show the telecommunications network of an On-Site Operations Co-

Over the past few years, the technologies and modes of telecommunication available have increased dramatically. This has created a new problem: the selection of the most appropriate and economical means of communications for each application. The table on the next page gives an overview of what is available. No description can, however, replace technical advice regarding a specific case. The telecommunication officers dispatched by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) with an OSOCC as well as specialists from agencies and organizations maintaining extensive field communications networks can help in the formulation of actual needs.

The coordination and facilitation of international assistance is particularly dependent on reliable telecommunications, and DHA has therefore acquired the necessary equipment to support its UNDAC stand-by teams and OSOCCs appropriately. A wide variety of equipment is required for on-site coordination as well as for the exchange of data with the Information Management Systems at Headquarters level; with the introduction of new technologies, even real-time access from the field to databases anywhere in the world has become a reality.

These diagrams show the communications links of an OSOCC as a typical example of what is needed and being used during emergencies. The networks operated by specialized agencies and peacekeeping forces in many countries are much larger, but their structures and the equipment used are very similar.



ordination Center (OSOCC) of DHA as a typical example of links with and in the field

Summary Table of Portable Communications Equipment for Use by DHA in the Initial Phase of an Emergency

Type and Range	Equipment	Cost and Weight	Remarks
VHF 3-25 km (depending on terrain and on antennas)	Hand-held or mobile units, the VHF Kit developed by DHA contains 6 hand-held and 2 mobile/base units, antennas and accessories.	400 - 700 $ per radio (DHA VHF Kit complete: US$ 5'000, 48 kg)	For on-site co-ordination and individual communications for safety and security of field personnel. Range depends on terrain. Under evaluation: VHF "wireless LAN" between field offices.
VHF (with repeater) 20-50 km and more	Equipment as above, in addition a Repeater Station, to be placed in the highest accessible location.	Cost of radios as above, a repeater station costs US$ 4'000, 50 kg	As above, but with a wider range; DHA has developed a self contained repeater station in a weatherproof case and with built-in batteries for 48 hrs.
HF (shortwave) (voice) regional to world-wide	Portable ("manpack") and mobile stations (not much bigger than a car radio) and base stations. Range depends on antenna used.	Typically US$ 2'000, no communications fees, 2 - 10 kg plus power supply	Commonly used for regional communications, 50 to 1'000 km, No communications fees unless used for connections through commercial land-stations.
HF (shortwave) (data) regional to world-wide	Base stations including modem for SITOR / PACKTOR, laptop computer and power supply (battery and charger), antenna.	Typically US$ 5'000 no communications fees, incl. modem and laptop 5 - 15 kg	Reliable data links with similar stations world wide need a qualified (locally trained) operator. No communications fees, unless messages are routed through commercial land-stations.
Satellite Terminal Inmarsat Standard C world-wide telex, data and (send-only) fax links	Terminal in a suitcase, including laptop computer, printer and omnidirectional antenna, limited autonomy (up to 4 hours stand-by) from built-in battery, then power is required from a generator or a car battery	Typically US$ 4'000, communications fees similar to those for regular telex, but calculated per byte rather than by time, 15 kg	Sends messages to any telex or fax machine, receives messages from any telex machine or C and A terminals. Via certain Land-Earth Stations Standard C terminals Can also send and receive data / e-mail. Storage-and-forward system only, real-time dialogue is not possible.
Satellite Terminal Inmarsat Standard A world-wide phone/fax/telex/ data links	Basic terminal, for phone links only, with parabolic antenna, in one suitcase, accessories (fax, power supply for use with car battery etc.) in a separate accessory box of 30 kg).	Typically US$ 40'000 for a complete station, communications fees (phone and fax) US$ 6.- to-10.- per minute (!), 20 kg	Full phone and fax capability, telex with laptop, high-speed-data capability optional. Standard A terminals are expensive to purchase and to operate, but the fastest means to establish reliable phone and fax links with the field in the initial phase of an emergency.
Satellite Terminal Inmarsat Standard M World-wide phone and (limited) fax links	Attaché-case, complete for phone communications, powered from generator or car battery, flat antenna in lid of case, portable telefax machine in a separate attaché-case.	Typically US$ 12'000, communications fees lower than for Standard A: US$ 3.- to 5.- per minute, 10 kg	Digital voice communication with narrow bandwidth over public phone network; fax slow (2400) and not compatible with all machines. Operational since late 1993 but not yet supported by all land earth stations. Quickly installed and very easy to use.
Satellite Terminal Inmarsat Standard B Same as Standard A, but digital communications mode	Digital version of the Standard A terminal, lower power consumption, smaller and easier to install antenna, some makes and models will offer high speed data links and multiple phone and fax lines (with field PBX) as options.	Purchase price and communications fees are expected to be lower than for Standard A, weight and dimensions similar to those of the Standard A terminals	To be fully operational 1995 and expected to partially replace Inmarsat A, offers better security and privacy of communications due to digital mode. Standard B will in the future also serve as the intermediate stage between Inmarsat A (quick response) and the Thin-Route Network (VSAT, for longer term use).

Prices indicated are approximate as per December 1994, in particular for satellite terminals there is a tendency towards lower prices for equipment and further efforts to reduce communications fees for humanitarian organizations are being undertaken.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and Emergency Telecommunications

In the meeting of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, and attended by the heads of agencies or their representatives, the issue of telecommunications in the field was raised. UNICEF drew the attention of the members of the committee to the problems encountered during the large-scale relief operations in Rwanda in the recent past and pointed out that lack of coordination between the networks of different organizations had increased security risks as well as caused substantial additional costs.

The meeting which was held on 9 December in Geneva welcomed the approach taken by DHA in constituting a Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET), endorsed the mandate of the WGET and requested DHA to report back to the IASC as soon as possible. In view of the importance of the problems, a specialized sub-group on operational issues will be convened on the occasion of the next WGET meeting in February. The WGET meeting in November had already agreed to establish two other subgroups, one on regulatory and legal issues and one on emergency information management systems.

The review of a report on telecommunications with and in the field during the initial phase of the Rwanda emergency commissioned by UNICEF indicates that there is a large potential for improvement. Modern communications technologies allow the use of a lower number of links with higher capacity; resource sharing does, however, not only require close cooperation between partners, but also the overcoming of regulatory restrictions and agreement on interfaces between different systems. All three sub-groups of the WGET will therefore be following up on the Rwanda experience.

The Role of Amateur Radio in Disaster Relief

In the age of satellite telephones and information highways, one important network is sometimes overlooked: that of more than 2.6 million amateur radio stations world-wide. In many cases such stations have provided first information about a disaster and served as the only link to the outside world. The amateur radio service has two distinct advantages: many of its stations are independent of any infrastructure - they can work on their own power resources such as batteries or generators, and they are operated by dedicated and skilled enthusiasts, may of which are masters in the art of improvisation. Amateur radio equipment therefore has a better chance to survive the impact of a disaster, and trained radio amateurs are best qualified to establish and maintain communications under the most demanding conditions, be it at their own stations or as volunteers who operate the equipment of rescue services and relief agencies.

The UN Headquarters amateur radio station in New York, with its special call sign 4U1UN, maintains regular links with counterparts in many disaster-prone countries, and the volunteers of its Radio Readiness Group are on call to operate the station 24 hours per day during acute emergencies. DHA has benefited from this possibility on numerous occasions. A similar station exists at the ITU building in Geneva (4U1ITU). Amateur stations can contact 4U1UN on the emergency network frequency of 14.268 MHz.

DHA works closely with the International amateur Radio Union (IARU) in the promotion of Amateur radio as part of disaster preparedness: this service can only perform its functions during an emergency if national authorities allow its use by issuing the respective radio licences. This, and general facilitation and encouragement of amateur radio, is specifically mentioned in the recent ITU resolutions on emergency telecommunications. The well equipped radio station W1AW at IARU Headquarters, the American Radio Relay League's office in Newington, CT, also provides another gateway for emergency communications with DHA.

Emergency Information Exchange

Emergency Information as a Tool for Action: Can there be a Universal Approach?

In theory, with today's technology, instant communication is possible everywhere in the world. Yet in every recent major humanitarian emergency, - Rwanda for example - information has not been "produced" as it should, and has not circulated as quickly and efficiently as it could, at least with regard to the needs of decision-makers in the humanitarian field.

Representatives of governments, NGOs and UN organizations are now complaining about this situation, which they blame on the inadequacy of existing information systems, judged too narrow in scope, too fragmented, and not global enough in their approach. As a result, they are calling for a new, universal, action-oriented, publicly accessible, real-time information system to be put in place.

Making sure that substantive information circulates as it should is one of the greatest challenges for any universal network

Is the creation of a universal system a realistic objective ? Recent discussions in the international community indicate that existing structures could indeed be modified and dynamized in order to set up a universally accepted humanitarian information exchange network. However, to be successful, such a system would have to take into account several factors:

Firstly, the new system should give priority to the *substantive need* (i.e. What information is immediately needed? What is available? What is missing?) over the *technical need* (How to classify, store, disseminate this information in real time and to whom?). The difficulty of course resides in the fact that each category of emergency manager has *different substantive needs.* The World Food Programme or the Center for Human Rights do not necessarily accord priority to the same factors. This should be considered in a positive way: it should stop us from making the worst mistake, which would be to combine all substantive needs in one simplified melting pot that would not be of use to any of the managers concerned.

There should not be too much difficulty in ensuring that real-time information available to one category of managers will also be available (except for confidential items) to other categories. What is important is that substantive emergency information does not consist primarily of quantitative data or the most recent statistics available; in fact in an emergency, what people ask for is a *qualitative* assessment of the emergency situation itself, together with recommendations for action. Making sure that this kind of substantive information circulates as it should is one of the greatest challenges for any universal network.

Secondly, we must consider *incentives needed for emergency managers* to share

information. An emergency manager who needs information has to obtain it from others located elsewhere in his own organization, or from outside. Those who are asked to produce information will do so if they know it will be used and if they are confident that, in return, they will also receive information which they need but do not produce. This means that all emergency managers should be considered both users and providers of information. Emergency managers would probably wish to obtain, from other emergency managers in different fields, information which is not usually in the public domain - the sort of restricted information in their own field which they themselves would not like to give to others. To a great extent, therefore, the usefulness of any international system will be its *capacity to permit instant sharing of restricted information*. The reliability of the information is therefore guaranteed by the provider of information to a system which also guarantees its confidentiality.

Thirdly, there are *constraints facing each emergency manager*. Each organization already has its own information systems, designed primarily to gather information for its own operations. Investments have been made and staff trained. It would be unrealistic to believe that organizations would give up all that they have done or are doing in the information field for the sake of joining a different universal system to which they would have to commit large resources and time.

Fourthly, there must be an agreement on the degree to which an internationally available *emergency information system should be centralized and how it should be managed*. One solution would be to simply link together existing "parochial" information systems, but this would not be extremely useful. It is however an attainable goal to agree on a common substantive *approach*, an overall definition of the main fields of information which need to be available for exchange between partners. This involves discussions between prospective partners to prioritize issues to be addressed.

Although it entails some degree of centralization, the organization and management of the system, could, on the contrary, be decentralized. Instead of one central unit being in charge of everything, responsibility for operating each specific field of information could be given to the lead entity in that particular field. This would provide an important incentive for key partners to participate in the initiative. It would also guarantee the substantive quality of the information. In addition, from a financial point of view, there would be great advantages in adopting such an approach: it would avoid the duplication inherent in setting up a new centralized system and the need to resort to important funding -something not to be expected from member states at this stage.

It would be unrealistic to believe that organizations would give up all that they have done ... for the sake of joining a different universal system to which they would have to commit large resources and time

Finally, it is important to monitor all changes in communications technology and quickly evaluate their impact on existing equipment and procedures. Some systems and networks may become obsolete very quickly, others need only small modifications in order to become highly efficient. If we look at the Internet, for example, the "invention" of the World Wide Web by CERN in 1989 and the introduction of the MOSAIC computer programme dynamized what was up till then an interesting but not necessarily useful network of computers.

In a sense, therefore, there is now a good possibility of establishing a shared universal and partly decentralized system provided some key questions are solved. There is need for simplicity in approach, for concentration on substantive elements of an emergency, and clearly established responsibility for operating different parts of the system.

49th Session of General Assembly Debates Humanitarian Assistance

On 23, 25 and 28 November, some 50 speakers made statements in the plenary session of the General Assembly under agenda item 37 entitled **"Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance".**

Sub-items under this topic included: strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance; special economic assistance to individual countries or regions; the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction; emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees restoring total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda; special assistance to countries receiving refugees from Rwanda.

Several resolutions were tabled. Among them were texts on the "white helmets" proposal, on Mozambique, on assistance to States affected by sanctions, on Burundi, on Rwanda, Liberia, Croatia and other issues - most of which were still under discussion as *DHA News* went to press. The following is a brief review of statements as they related to DHA and its work.

General

Firm support was expressed for DHA under the leadership of USG Hansen, in rising to meet the growing challenges of providing humanitarian assistance. Delegations also paid tribute to the UN agencies and IASC members, and particularly to the High Commissioner for Refugees. The Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on measures to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations was widely commended for its quality and constructiveness.

Numerous Member States, however, strongly asserted the need to provide DHA with adequate staff and administrative resources from the UN's regular budget (Nordic countries, G-77 and others.)

The Role of the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC)

Delegations consistently emphasized the role of the IASC as the primary coordination mechanism and policy body and welcomed its more frequent meetings. Several Member States, however, expressed their wish to see greater consultation and regular debriefings between governments and the IASC and welcomed initiatives taken by USG Hansen in this vein. Attention was also drawn to the need for the IASC to address "homeless" issues such as demining, internally displaced persons and demobilization. The Nordic countries, in particular, requested the IASC to report to ECOSOC in 1995 on efforts undertaken in this regard.

Field Level Coordination

The Nordic countries, Germany (on behalf of the European Union), Japan, Canada, Australia, Pakistan and the United States expressed support for measures to strengthen coordination in the field, and endorsed the proposed procedures for the selection of Humanitarian Coordinators. Norway and Japan called for their swift implementation.

The European Union praised in particular the United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office (UNREO) and the Humanitarian Coordination Office in Angola (UCAH). Canada expressed the view that the agenda that occupies a predominant position in the field at the onset of an emergency should provide leadership to the others. The US, the Nordic countries and Japan praised the

initiatives for increased cooperation and planning between DHA, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA).

In contrast, Algeria, speaking for the G-77, and China, expressed reservations about the appointment of Humanitarian Coordinators. India stated that the Resident Coordinator was responsible for field coordination of humanitarian activities. Echoing Algeria, India also suggested that there was a danger of DHA stepping beyond its mandate; the standing mandates of agencies and relevant GA resolutions should be fully respected. Neutrality of humanitarian action and the primacy of State sovereignty were also emphasized in statements by other developing nations.

Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF)

G-77 States expressed support for the expansion of CERF and increased resources for DHA, while traditional donor nations were more sceptical in this regard.

Germany, Norway and Australia called for an expanded donor base to CERF and increased accessibility. Australia noted that the Fund had no ceiling. Germany and Austria stated that the Fund should be replenished more promptly by agencies. Canada and China stated that DHA should also be more selective in disbursements, while the United States held the view that agencies should report better, through DHA, on how CERF funds were spent, before any enlargement of the Fund. Austria encouraged a study of the complementarity of the CERF with emergency resources available to various agencies.

Among points of consensus expressed in the debate were: the value of the Consolidated Appeals Process and the need to strengthen it further (Norway); the heroic achievements of humanitarian staff and the need to take additional measures to ensure their protection (Barbados): "We must remember that it is the efforts of humanitarian workers in the field, who redeem the organization in the public eye nd not those in these halls." Unanimous support was expressed for the work of IDNDR, and for the Plan of Action which had emerged from the Yokohama Conference.

Once the UN has authorized the delivery of humanitarian aid, no power on earth has the right to prevent its delivery

Among other points made by some delegations were:

- **Norway:** The IASC Working Group should be given increased decision-making power to determine strategy in complex emergencies. Where appropriate, this power should be delegated to the field.

- **Germany:** Agencies should continue to second personnel to DHA. DHA's work should be better prioritized.

- **Japan:** The most important task for DHA is sorting out the respective roles of agencies in emergencies, based on their particular mandates. Japan also emphasized the need to further develop the advocacy role of DHA.

- **United States:** "We have to plan together not just for response but for prevention and solutions."

- **Croatia:** Humanitarian aid to the UNPAs has assisted Serb military forces. Fuel has been used for tanks and food for soldiers. Distribution should occur outside the UNPAs.

- **Zaire and Uganda:** Expressed thanks for what the international community had done for refugees in Zaire, but felt that the host communities had been neglected.

- **Argentina:** In introducing the draft on establishment of "white helmets", which calls for further study and consultations on the proposal, Argentina explained that the main purpose of the white helmets would be to bridge the gap in practice between relief and development.

- **Israel:** Drew attention to the questions of land mines and announced that it had decided upon a two-year moratorium on their transfer. Furthermore, Israel offered

its know-how, assistance and training in mine clearance to all interested parties.

A number of delegations cited the disproportionate share of resources being channelled to humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping at the expense of development. They noted that local capacity-building was important for prevention and that investment in development could prevent emergencies.

The "Purity" of Humanitarian Action

Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), stated that strengthened co-ordination remained indispensable, adding that bureaucracy had to be avoided and that "true coordination had to replace cohabitation". More efficient planning is required, in particular to allow humanitarian agencies to withdraw after emergencies. Response has to be less selective and less media- oriented. The ICRC is open to coordination but its independence is its "fundamental working asset". The concept of humanitarianism is applied too loosely. There is a need for a clear definition of roles and mandates. Humanitarian action cannot substitute political action. Political action is crucial to resolve conflict. Political actors could facilitate humanitarian action, but should not replace it.

He added that International Tribunals are welcome "to end the reign of impunity". Humanitarian agencies, by contrast, are "not judges and much less prosecutors. Sanctions should take humanitarian consequences into account. **"We must humanize political action rather than politicizing humanitarian action"**. Similar points were made by the President of the Federation, who referred to complex emergencies as "political minefields" and called for "greater clarity of purpose" in humanitarian action.

The United States, for its part, stated that, with an increasing link between peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance, there is an ever-decreasing number of "pure humanitarian missions". In conclusion, it was stated that because humanitarian missions now "have a political dimension ... once the UN has authorized the delivery of humanitarian aid, no power on earth has the right to prevent its delivery. Summoning the will and the power to enforce that principle is a challenge and responsibility for us all".

Secretary-General Establishes Trust Fund for Clearance of Land Mines

A Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance, established by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was officially opened to contributions on 30 November. Funds received will support United Nations activities and operations relating to land mines, including clearance, surveys, training and mine-awareness education. In a report to the Forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General noted that such a trust fund would greatly enhance the effectiveness and timeliness of the international community's response to mine problems and mine assistance. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is responsible for the Trust Fund's overall management and implementation.

The Secretary-General pointed out in his report that more than 110 million land mines are scattered in 64 countries. New

land mines are being laid at a rate of between 2 million and 5 million each year. The report also noted that, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, more than 800 people a month are killed by land mines, most of them innocent civilians, and thousands more are maimed. "Land mines may be one of the most widespread, lethal and long-lasting forms of pollution we have yet encountered, and we are currently losing the battle to protect innocent civilians from their effects", the report said. United Nations involvement in mine clearance assistance has grown from operations in one country in 1988 to 12 such operations in the last quarter of 1994.

The estimated cost of clearing land mines already in place is at least US $33 billion. Last year, the international community allocated approximately US $70 million to clear roughly 100,000 land mines. Those figures do not take into account costs of treating victims who survive land mine blasts. The lifetime cost of treating each surviving land mine victim is estimated at US $3,000. To these costs must be added the toll on countries where the presence of land mines prevents economic and social recovery.

Donations, by cheque or money order made payable to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance, can be sent to:

Department of Humanitarian Affairs,
Room S-3627,
United Nations,
New York, NY 10017.

In New York, contributions may also be deposited directly at Chemical Bank in the United Nations General Fund (Account No. 015-005291). In Geneva, contributions may be deposited with Swiss Bank Corporation, P.O. Box 2770, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland, for credit to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs Bank Account (Account No. CO-590.160.1).

All cheques and deposits should specify the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance as the beneficiary of the contribution.

Press Release,
New York, 2 December 1994

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs at Work

September - December 1994

Relief Operations around the World

Algeria - Floods: Following heavy rains on 30 and 31 October, the Western part of the country suffered severe flooding. A joint UN mission speedily assessed needs and relief action began immediately. The following article, given here in English and French, was compiled from the assessment mission's reports:

The Tindouf area in Western Algeria witnessed extensive floods following unprecedented rains which fell on 30 and 31 October. Both the local population and the Sahraoui refugees living in the region were greatly affected by the disaster. Up to 30,000 people were left without shelter and eight people died in the camp of El Ayoun, located 12 km from Tindouf, where destruction was most impressive.

On 1 November, the national holiday in Algeria, further reports about the damage indicated that, even if there was no immediate threat for life, the magnitude of the destruction was becoming problematic.

Taking immediate action to assist the victims, the Algerian authorities distributed tents and dispatched army trucks to camp sites in order to evacuate the refugees and move them to safer higher ground. The United Nations decided to field an Inter-Agency Mission to help the local authorities. On 4 November, the UNHCR Representative in Algiers, accompanied by a WFP programme officer, left for Tindouf, where he was joined by a DHA delegate and by a Representative of the Algerian Red Crescent on 6 November. Over four days the Mission visited the camps of El Ayoun, Dakhla, Smara, Awsar, to evaluate the damage and assess the relief requirements.

A great number of community structures had been devastated. Roofs had collapsed and walls had cracked. In El Ayoun camp, 90% of the shelters were destroyed. Many of the tents were washed away along with the very few belongings kept inside, as well as

La région de Tindouf en Algérie occidentale a été, les 30 et 31 octobre, le témoin de graves inondations causées par des pluies diluviennes sans précédent. La catastrophe a entrainé des dégâts considérables tant au sein de la population locale que parmi les réfugiés sahraouis qui vivent dans la région. 30 000 personnes sont restées sans abri et huit sont mortes dans le camp d'El Ayoun, à 12 km de Tindouf, où les dégâts ont été les plus importants. Le 1er novembre, jour de la fête nationale en Algérie, d'autres informations indiquaient que, même si d'autres vies humaines n'étaient pas directement menaçées, la catastrophe prenait une ampleur inquiétante.

Ayant immédiatement réagi pour venir en aide aux sinistrés, les autorités algériennes ont distribué des tentes et envoyé des camions de l'armée afin d'évacuer les réfugiés vers des zones plus sûres. L'Organisation des Nations Unies a décidé d'envoyer sur le terrain une mission inter-agences afin d'aider les autorités locales. Le 4 novembre, le délégué du HCR à Alger, accompagné d'un administrateur de programme du PAM, s'est rendu à Tindouf, où il a été rejoint, le 6 novembre, par un délégué du Département des affaires humanitaires (DAH) et un représentant du Croissant-Rouge algérien. Pendant quatre jours, la mission a visité les camps de El Ayoun, Dakhla, Smara, Awsar, pour évaluer les dégâts et estimer les secours nécessaires.

Un grand nombre d'installations communautaires étaient détruites. Des toits s'étaient effondrés et des murs s'étaient fissurés. Dans le camp d'El Ayoun, 90 % des abris étaient détruits. La plupart des tentes avaient été emportées par les eaux, avec le peu qu'elles conte-

the small earth and sand brick - thus totally unadapted to resist heavy rains - houses, built next to the tents for cooking and shelter purposes. Public infrastructures such as schools, clinics, dispensaries and food warehouses, were badly damaged. Water wells were filled with mud and sand. Therefore, one of the immediate priorities was to provide the victims with shelter and drinking water. Another concern was the provision of blankets, especially in view of the upcoming harsh Sahara winter.

Three relief flights were organized by UNHCR and DHA, with the logistical support of the Algerian Defence Ministry, in the framework of the MCDA - Oslo Guidelines. Tents, blankets, and other relief items were distributed.

Thanks to the assistance provided by Algerian authorities, the manner in which local rescue teams organized themselves and the arrival of relief assistance, the extent of damage was limited. However, the emergency relief phase, expected to last four weeks, would have to be followed by a phase of "normalization" to allow the camp population to return to normal life within three months.

naient, ainsi que les petites maisons faites de briques de terre et de sable - donc incapables de résister à de fortes pluies - construites près des tentes pour servir d'abri et de cuisine. Les infrastructures publiques (écoles, cliniques, dispensaires et magasins alimentaires) étaient gravement endommagés. Les puits étaient remplis de boue et de sable. Il fallait donc immédiatement fournir aux victimes des abris et de l'eau potable. Il fallait aussi leur fournir des couvertures, compte tenu en particulier de l'arrivée de l'hiver, qui est rude au Sahara.

L'envoi de trois avions transportant des biens secours a été organisé par le HCR et le DAH, avec l'appui logistique du Ministère algérien de la défense, dans le cadre des Directives d'Oslo. Des tentes, des couvertures et d'autres biens de secours ont été distribués. Grâce à l'assistance des autorités algériennes et à la manière dont les équipes de secours locales se sont mises en place, les dommages ont été circonscrits. Cependant, la phase des secours d'urgence, qui devrait durer quatre semaines, devra être suivie d'une phase de "normalisation" pour permettre à la population des camps de reprendre une vie normale dans les trois mois à venir.

Benin - Floods: The Borgou district was extensively flooded in October following exceptionally heavy rainfall. 20,000 people were homeless, 4,600 houses destroyed. 19,000 ha of agricultural land were inundated and heavy losses were inflicted to both livestock and crops. Following the Government's request for international assistance, DHA made an emergency grant of US $30,000.

Bhutan - Floods: On 6-7 October, a major flash flood in the remote Himalayan region of Punakha killed at least 22 people. It damaged agricultural land and roads, and caused important losses in the timber industry. This was the first major natural disaster to strike Bhutan for more than two decades. DHA closely monitored the situation and issued one Information Report.

Cameroon - Floods: In mid-September, the Northern part of the country around the towns of Maroua and Mokola was flooded following heavy rains. The area along the Benue river was also inundated. Six people died and houses, farms and infrastructure were severely damaged. DHA issued one Information Report.

Djibouti - Floods: On 21 November, the country was swept by unprecendented flash floods which struck after two days of torrential rains. 105 people were killed. In the city, which has a population of 300,000, about 100,000 people were affected. The floods also affected several thousand people in the South as well as in the North of the country. Approximately 3,000 persons had to be evacuated to temporary shelter. The Government declared a state of emergency while activating at the same time its national emergency plan. DHA immediately alerted the international community and dispatched an UNDAC team which worked closely with the UN/DHA Resident Coordinator and national authorities in helping identify the needs for relief assistance. Five Situation Reports were issued by DHA which released an emergency cash grant of US $30,000 and organised a relief flight from its Pisa Warehouse, for a total value of US $230,000 (funded by Italy). A number of donors expressed interest in supporting the Government's rehabilitation efforts, rehabilitating and reconstructing the capital's "quartiers populaires" sanitation system, country-side wells, railway and road network being among the top priorities.

Egypt - Floods: Since October, 134 villages have been affected by extensive floods in the governorates of Asyut, Sohag, Qena and Luxor in Southern Egypt. Following the Government's request, DHA launched an appeal for international assistance. Total contributions reported to DHA amounted to US $173,977. For more information on relief assistance to Egypt, here follows the report of the UNDAC team's mission in the field:

Dans la nuit du 2 novembre 1994, dans la Haute Vallée du Nil, les habitants de la région ont été réveillés par une pluie forte et dense, un vrai déluge. Certains d'entre eux se sont demandés s'ils ne couraient pas un réel danger, mais la plupart ne se sont rendu compte de ce qui se passait qu'au moment même de la catastrophe. De chaque côté du Nil, il y a une bande de terre, de largeur variable, bordée d'escarpements abruptes qui montent jusqu'au plateau avoisinant. C'est dans cette vallée fertile que la plupart des habitants vivent et c'est là aussi que les inondations frappent brutalement, l'eau du plateau avoisinant se déversant le long des escarpements, traversant ensuite les villes et les villages avant de se jeter dans le Nil, emportant tout sur son passage. Ces pluies ont causé d'énormes dégâts, identiques à ceux qui s'étaient produits avant que le barrage d'Assouan ait "domestiqué" le Nil.

La communauté internationale a d'abord été alertée par les médias qui ont fait état des dégâts causés à la ville de Durunka par un accident industriel lié à une inondation : du pétrole en feu, charrié par les eaux, s'était répandu dans la ville. Cela s'était passé en fait bien des jours avant que la communauté internationale n'apprenne la vérité sur l'ampleur de la catastrophe.

Réponse du Département des affaires humanitaires (DAH)

Après avoir suivi de près l'évolution de la situation, le DAH a décidé de débloquer un don d'urgence pour l'achat sur place de biens de secours et d'envoyer une équipe des Nations Unies chargée de l'évaluation et de la coordination en cas de catastrophe (UNDAC). L'équipe, composée de deux personnes, devait superviser la remise des biens de secours et procéder à une évaluation de la situation sur le terrain.

Trois vols d'urgence ont été organisés à partir du dépôt du DAH à Pise les 9, 10 et 11 novembre, transportant 34,5 tonnes de biens de secours, dont 29 tonnes offertes par l'Italie et 5,5 tonnes par le Japon. A bord de *l'Hercules C 130* des forces aériennes belges qui s'envolait pour le Caire le 9, se trouvaient les deux membres de l'Equipe des Nations Unies.

La mission d'évaluation et les résultats : témoignage de l'équipe UNDAC

A notre arrivée, nous avons été accueillis par des membres des forces aériennes égyptiennes, un représentant de l'ambassade de Belgique ainsi que par le représentant résident adjoint du PNUD qui assurait la coordination des opérations d'urgence pour le DAH. Après avoir été mis au courant des derniers évènements, nous avons mis sur pied un plan d'action. Notre idée était de réunir un maximum de renseignements afin de permettre à la communauté humanitaire internationale de fournir l'aide nécessaire. Il fallait réunir ces renseignements à la fois à partir de la capitale et sur le terrain; une équipe locale inter-agences des Nations Unies venait d'être mise sur pieds et nous avions prévu de nous rendre dans les gouvernorats les plus touchés : Assiout, Suhaq, Qena et Louxor. Mais la situation nous a obligés à modifier notre plan.

Lors de notre première journée en Egypte, nous avons participé à la réunion de l'Equipe des Nations Unies pour la gestion des opérations en cas de catastrophe (UN-DMT), composée de représentants de l'UNICEF, de l'OMS, du PAM, de l'UNESCO et de la FAO ainsi que du représentant résident adjoint du PNUD. Pendant cette réunion, nous nous sommes aperçus qu'il manquait des renseignements venant de la région sinistrée. Cela était dû au fait que les zones les plus gravement touchées étaient physiquement coupées du reste du pays. Ces régions étaient aussi celles où les problèmes de sécurité étaient les plus sérieux. Ces problèmes nous préoccupaient tout particulièrement, car la situation en matière de sécurité risquait de restreindre nos déplacements et de freiner notre travail d'évaluation. Nous avons alors décidé de réunir des renseignements à partir de la capitale.

Nous nous sommes vite rendu compte que l'information fiable était une denrée rare. Combien y avait-il réellement de sans-abri ? Combien de maisons, d'écoles, d'hôpitaux, etc., avaient été détruits ou endommagés ? Quelle était la situation sanitaire et qu'en était-il de l'approvisionement en eau potable ? Quelle était la situation dans le domaine de la santé ? Qu'en était-il des stocks de nourriture ? Quels étaient, concrètement, les besoins immédiats, et les besoins à long terme ? Nous avons commencé à rassembler tous les renseignements disponibles auprès des autorités égyptiennes, notamment auprès du Ministère de l'administration locale, qui était le centre de coordination, et du Ministère de la défense qui s'occupait de la logistique. A l'échelon local, les gouverneurs étaient responsables de la coordination, et le Croissant-Rouge égyptien encadrait les activités des ONG.

A la réunion de l'UN-DMT, nous avions déjà reçu les renseignements des organisations du système des Nations Unies, si bien que l'étape suivante consistait à s'adresser aux autres organisations représentées dans la région. Le contact a d'abord été pris avec les ONG et nous avons obtenu des renseignements utiles et bénéficié de l'aide d'ONG telles que la Fédération internationale des sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge, le *Catholic Relief Service* et *Project Hope*. Nous avons également rencontré une équipe d'intervention et d'évaluation en cas de catastrophe des Etats-Unis (US DART-team).

Tard dans la soirée du vendredi 11 novembre, les équipes ont classé les renseignements obtenus et établi un ordre de priorité. Bien entendu, étant donné les circonstances, ces renseignements ne pouvaient être ni exhaustifs, ni détaillés, mais ils étaient ce que l'on pouvait obtenir de plus complet à ce moment-là. Au total, quelque 30 000 maisons avaient été détruites ou endommagées, 150 000 à 200 000 personnes étaient

sans abri (dont environ 70 000 se trouvaient dans des camps, les autres ayant été accueillies par des parents ou vivant dans les ruines de leurs maisons ou sur leurs terres de crainte de les perdre s'ils se déplaçaient). Il fallait fournir aux habitants de la région des citernes d'eau et des moyens de transport (bien qu'il n'y ait pas eu, semble-t-il, de pénurie d'eau potable), des abris, des couvertures et des vêtements, des médicaments et une certaine quantité de vivres. Une grande partie de ces biens de secours pouvait être achetée sur place, ce qui impliquait que l'essentiel de l'aide à l'Egypte se ferait sous forme de contributions en espèces. Ces renseignements et d'autres, plus détaillés, ont été communiqués le lendemain matin à l'Equipe des Nations Unies pour la gestion des opérations en cas de catastrophe (UN-DMT) et au DAH à Genève pour permettre la préparation de rapports de situation ainsi que la coordination de l'action internationale face à la catastrophe.

Nous avons quitté Le Caire pour Genève le dimanche 13 novembre.

Notre conclusion

Lors d'une mission d'évaluation, il est important de savoir que beaucoup de renseignements peuvent être obtenus à partir de la capitale d'un pays frappé par une catastrophe. Dans le cas d'une mission de l'UNDAC, on pourrait donc, en plus de l'équipe envoyée sur le terrain, charger une petite équipe de rassembler des renseignements dans la capitale. **Grâce aux moyens de communication par satellite entre les deux équipes, on pourrait à tout moment disposer de renseignements à jour.**

Ce témoignage d'une mission sur le terrain a été préparé par R. Mueller et F. Nielssen, membres de l'Equipe UNDAC et du service de la coordination des secours du DAH.

India - Floods: Heavy monsoon rains and cyclonic storms during the period 31 October to 7 November caused serious flooding in the States of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh as well as in some parts of Karnataka. The death toll exceeded 200. In Andhra Pradesh, 93,000 families had to be evacuated. From June to October, the south-west monsoon led to widespread flooding in 18 Indian States, causing more than 2,000 deaths and damaging 635,000 houses. The central and state governments organized rescue and relief operations and did not ask for international assistance. DHA issued a series of reports to keep the international community informed. Cash contributions amounting to US $204,000 were reported to DHA.

Indonesia - Earthquakes and Volcano: The country underwent a series of earthquake tremors and volcanic activity. On 9 October, an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale, followed by tidal waves reaching three metres high, damaged six villages on Obi island, North Maluku. One person was killed and about 90 were injured. Subsequently, the earth trembled in Lombok, Bali, Maluku and Java. Fortunately, there were no casualties. A cold *lahar* from Rinjani volcano on Lombok island killed 30 people on 3 November. DHA closely monitored the situation and issued four Information Reports.

Iran - Rain and Storm: Heavy rains and a storm in the Caspian provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran in mid-October killed three people, damaged more than 7,500 houses, agricultural land and road infrastructures. Relief operations were undertaken by the Iranian Red Crescent Society. DHA issued one Information Report.

Moldova - Storms/Floods: After a period of drought, severe storms blew over Moldova causing extensive floods in the Republic throughout August. 47 people died and about 25,000 were affected and made homeless. Economic losses were estimated at US $90 million. Following a request from the Government, DHA launched an appeal for international assistance and made available an emergency grant of US $30,000. A DHA Relief Officer was fielded to assist the UN Resident Coordinator's office in the assessment of needs and relief coordination. In cooperation with the Belgian Air Force, DHA organized, in September, from its Pisa Warehouse, two airlifts totalling 22 metric tons of relief items donated by Japan, Germany and Luxembourg, which also financed the airlifts, for a total value of US $130,000. Russia, Ukraine and Belarus provided considerable relief and reconstruction assistance in kind. Contributions in cash reported to DHA amounted to US $5,2 million of which US $567,000 was channelled through DHA which issued six Situation Reports. After the emergency phase, DHA continued providing assistance through consultancy on disaster mitigation and preparedness planning.

Nigeria - Floods: Excessive rains and severe floods since September caused unprecedented damage in a number of states in northern Nigeria. Over 400,000 people are reported to have been displaced. Floods caused damage to well over US $100 million worth of property, infrastructure, and agriculture. Ten died in Borno State's capital, Maiduguri, and 12 in Adamawa State. Rains caused landslides in Abia State, where the estimated economic damage amounted to more than US $65 million. Responding to the Government's appeal for international assistance, DHA immediately released an emergency grant of US $30,000. Three Situation Reports were issued.

Papua New Guinea - Volcanic eruption: Two volcanic cones erupted on 19 September in Eastern New Britain. A joint Governmental/UN team on-site reported 100,000 people affected, including local communities providing support to evacuees, in need of emergency. The Government addressed a request to local organizations and international donor agencies for relief assistance. DHA issued seven Situation Reports, and made an emergency grant of US $30,000. Contributions reported to DHA amounted to US $346,008.

Philippines - Typhoon: Typhoon "Teresa" struck Luzon on 21 October, causing damage in Metro Manila and in ten provinces. Almost 90,000 people were affected. Ten people were killed. Damage to infrastructure and agriculture was estimated at about US $17 million. A month earlier, on 10/11 September, a tropical depression had killed seven people, causing US $4 million damage in the Northern provinces of Ilocos Norte and Cagayan. *Lahar* triggered from Mt. Pinatubo affected 10,000 families, killed 20 people and destroyed 2,000 houses in Pampanga province. All concerned services and agencies in the Philippines mobilized available resources to carry out evacuation and rescue/relief operations. DHA issued six Information Reports.

Senegal - Floods: Following weeks of heavy rain, the Saint-Louis region was flooded at the end of October. 17,500 people became homeless and had to be evacuated to emergency shelter centres. Housing, public buildings, infrastructure and crops were

extensively damaged. DHA made available an emergency grant of US $30,000 and published two Situation Reports.

Sudan - Floods: Heavy rains since August caused a number of localized floods in Northern Sudan, causing extensive damage in the states of Darfur, Kordofan, Kassala, as well as in displaced camps near the Khartoum area. At least eight people died, and more than 70,000 were affected (based on a 6-person in a family assumption). Thousands of houses as well as infrastructures were destroyed or damaged. The victims faced a major threat of malaria and other water-born diseases. In Khartoum State, the majority of houses in the flooded residential area, mostly inhabited by the urban poor, were destroyed. In Wadi Falfa on the Egyptian border, a flash flood on 8 October destroyed nearly 1,200 houses, and 5,965 people were affected. In response to the Government's appeal for international assistance, DHA released an emergency grant of US $42,500 to meet the immediate assistance needs. Four Situation Reports have been issued to date.

Viet Nam - Floods: Heavy rains and extensive flooding with, in some areas, the highest water level recorded in the last 30 years, caused havoc in the Mekong Delta. Parts of North-Central Viet Nam were also flooded after a series of typhoons. As at the end of October, the national authorities reported 310 people dead, 400,000 people in need of relief assistance and the loss of 743,000 tons of rice. The total damage was estimated at US $177 million. The Viet Nam Red Cross appealed for international assistance through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. National authorities and services, together with foreign organizations, provided relief assistance and financial support. DHA published two Information Reports.

Russia - Nuclear Power Plant Exercise: In November, EMERCOM of Russia hosted an international command post exercise, sponsored by DHA, focusing on a simulated nuclear power plant accident. Some 40 international experts, representing 14 nations and four international organizations, took active part in the exercise operating from EMERCOM's command centre in Moscow. The experts also visited the Kalininskaya Nuclear Power Plant (380 km from Moscow) to inspect its security arrangements. The exercise provided a valuable test of international arrangements for notification, for evaluation of environmental effects across borders, and for the coordination of assistance provided by military and civil defence assets from different nations.

Russia - Oil Spill: The joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit, established in July 1994, has been playing an active role in keeping the international community informed about the recent major oil spill in the Arctic region of the Russian Federation. As soon as the spill near the city of Ousinsk was reported, the Unit officially requested information from the Russian authorities on 26 October. On the basis of the information received, the Unit operated as an information broker and clearing-house to ensure that the international community was kept informed of the details of the incident through the provision of four Information Reports. Also, detailed information was collated from international sources both on the environmental characteristics of the afflicted site on specific practical information on managing oil spills in the arctic region. The information, along with satellite imagery and maps provided by countries and international organizations, was sent to the relevant Russian authorities to help in their management of the accident.

For the first time, on 8 December, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme combined their expertise to send a multilateral team to this environmental emergency. The team concluded that the amount of oil spilled from pipelines in the Vozey/Usinsk area of the Komi Republic is at least five times higher than officially claimed by the Komi officials. The team also concluded that the oil pollution is not from a single spill but has resulted from many different oil spills occurring over many years, with an increasing frequency of spills in the summer and autumn of 1994. Although the current level of pollution is unlikely to have a significant environ-mental impact outside Russia, the continued chronic pollution from the oil fields is likely to have an increasingly detrimental effect over time. Therefore, it is important to reduce the pollution load being discharged to the rivers around the region if long-term environmental degradation is to be avoided.

Emergency Shipments/Airlifts

Algeria: In the framework of the floods which affected the Southern part of Algeria in early November, a request from the Resident Representative for various shelter and basic relief items was received in DHA. An airlift, consisting of more than 15 tons of tents, blankets, plastic sheeting and generators, donated by the Italian Government for a total value of over US $140,000 was therefore

organized from Pisa to the Tindouf area, and carried out in cooperation with the Belgian Air Force. The unloading of the goods at destination was supervised by a DHA delegate taking part in a joint needs assessment mission and they were handed over to the Algerian Red Crescent for immediate distribution, in cooperation with the local emergency response authorities, to the affected people.

Croatia: In cooperation with the Italian Government, DHA organized, for the affected populations of Split and Zagreb, the transportation/ shipment of 200,000 kilos of medical supplies and equipment to Croatia. The total operation, entirely financed by Italy, amounted to US $1,300,000. Transportation was undertaken partly by road and partly by sea, the different shipments being composed of medecines, medical equipment and surgical instruments.

Egypt: As a result of the floods affecting varous districts of Southern Egypt, and in the frame-work of the appeal for international assistance launched by the Egyptian Government on 5 November, various needs were identified. Nearly 34 tons of various basic relief goods - tents, kitchen sets, plastic sheeting, blankets, water tanks and jerricans, for a total value of nearly US $300,000 - were immediately released from the DHA Pisa Warehouse stocks donated by Italy and Japan and carried, thanks to a C130 Hercules of the Belgian Air Force, between 9 and 11 November to Cairo. There, they were received by the UNDP/DHA Resident Representative and handed over to the Egyptian Military Forces, in charge of the distribution to the disaster-affected people. Two DHA delegates accompanied the first flight and assisted the Resident Representative.

Viet Nam: In cooperation with the Governement of Luxembourg, DHA organized in November, shipment from its Pisa Warehouse of 55 metric tons of construction materials. The goods were transported by sea to Hai Phong port and then by road to Hanoi were the DHA representative handed them over to the Viet Nam Red Cross.

Agreement with WHO on the use of the PISA Warehouse: WHO and DHA have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the use of the DHA Pisa Warehouse, Italy. According to the MOU, the two organizations will co-operate in the storage of emergency relief supplies in the warehouse, and in their dispatch from there to disaster/emergency stricken areas. WHO will provide medical and sanitation equipment, and DHA, which retains overall responsibility for the management of the warehouse, will give storage space. WHO will be responsible for the technical supervision of the medical stockpile. The two organizations will co-operate in the organization of relief flights to disaster/emergency stricken areas. They will meet regularly to review the progress of implementation of the MOU.

As a result of this development, the Pisa stockpile will expand to include not only relief supplies such as blankets and tents, but also medical items, which represent an important component of the immediate needs in most disasters. In October, during the 1994 Meeting on Emergency Stockpiles, further discussions took place with donors and United Nations agencies on the co-operative use of the Pisa warehouse.

Shipments from DHA Pisa Warehouse: A Summary

September - in cooperation with the Japanese Government, airlift by commercial air line of 8 tons of relief goods to Niger for the people affected by floods;

September/October - in cooperation with the Italian Government, road and/or sea shipment of 200 tons of medical items to Split/ Zagreb (Croatia);

- in cooperation with the Governments of Germany, Japan and Luxembourg, two airlifts for a total delivery of approx. 22 tons of relief goods to Chisniau (Moldova) after floods.

November - in cooperation with the Italian Government, airlift of 15 tons of relief goods to Tindouf, Algeria after floods.

- in cooperation with the Governments of Italy and Japan, three airlifts in order to forward 34 tons of basic relief items to Egypt in connection with the floods in the southern part of the country.

Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies

Afghanistan

At the end of 1994, Afghanistan is facing another winter of death, destruction and displacement. Afghanistan, at the end of 1994, is a country of vivid contrasts: reconstruction in Herat and Jalalabad, destruction in Kabul; refugees returning to their villages from neighbouring countries, people fleeing the capital; boys in school in Mazar, or toting kalashnikovs on the road to Kandahar; a bumper harvest in Kunar, hunger in Badakhshan.

In April 1994, UNOCHA issued an Appeal for the period through September 1994, requesting US $25.5 million to address the new humanitarian crisis and US $36.6 million to support ongoing humanitarian programmes. As at 31 July, US $19.8 million had been pledged. Additional support from the international community was still required to enable the UN agencies continue to meet the most pressing humanitarian needs in the country.

On 1 October 1994, another Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal was launched, in order to cover, over a one year period, the emergency humanitarian requirements for UN programmes in the country and address the specific needs during the next winter and summer seasons. The emphasis for the winter period is on emergency help for up to 800,000 displaced persons, of which 350,000 are in camps near Jalalabad. The Appeal, prepared by UNOCHA under the direction of the Coordinator, Mr. Sotirios Mousouris, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, involved close consultations with the UN agencies participating in the humanitarian assistance programme as well as with NGOs and local authorities.

The appeal requirements totalling US $106,393,000 include voluntary repatriation and relief to displaced persons, mine clearance, agriculture, food, health and sanitation, as well as coordination of relief support and assistance to women. For mine clearance alone, one of the appeal's priorities, the problem of mines being a major obstacle for repatriation, US $18 million are needed.

Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq

During the period under review, lack of funding support to the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq, coupled with recent reductions of Government food rations due to stock shortages, have further aggravated the situation throughout Iraq. Between 1 April and 30 September 1994, 25 per cent of overall programme requirements, estimated at US $288.5 million, were covered, mainly from carry-over funds from previous phases, contributions in-kind and voluntary contributions/"matching" funds deposited in the UN Escrow Account. Approximately US $74 million are urgently needed to support priority projects until the end of March 1995. All sectors included in the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme have been severely affected, in particular water/sanitation and health, where essential drugs, medical supplies and spare parts are critically needed. Sharp increases of malaria cases and water-borne diseases, as well as increased morbidity and mortality rates among mothers and infants have been reported by UNICEF and WHO.

These concerns were conveyed during an informal consultation meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq, held in Geneva on 11 October 1994 and attended by 75 donor, UN Agency/programme and NGO/IGO representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to review the implementation of the programme under the current phase, to discuss planned activities for the period October 1994 - March 1995, as well as to call upon the international donor community to support the efforts of the UN Agencies/programmes and humanitarian NGOs to assist all those in need, in particular as the winter sets in. Meanwhile, DHA approved a loan of US $3 million to UNICEF from its Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) for the distribution of kerosene in northern Iraq (pending the receipt of a pledged contribution by the United Kingdom).

Following the return on 13 November 1994 of the UN Coordinator from a visit to the northern Governorates, a plan of reduction of the UN Guards Contingent in Iraq (UNGCI) personnel will be prepared. It is expected that, from a current level of 143, approximately 85 Guards will remain in Iraq by mid-December 1994, unless additional funding is secured.

In view of the continuing needs for relief and rehabilitation country-wide, it is anticipated that a new Inter-Agency Appeal will be prepared shortly, also as a result of a planned DHA mission to Iraq in early 1995.

Special Emergency Programme for the NIS

Planning for the winter is a major concern of the populations in the Caucasus as well as in Tajikistan. Last year, tree cutting for fire wood in the outskirts of cities caused considerable deforestation, and the community planting actions which followed during the spring are barely starting to show results. This year, however, families in these countries are again faced with the worry of providing heating for their homes throughout the coldest months. Meanwhile, foods are preserved at home in anticipation of possible shortages, and many families are preparing to host elderly relatives during the winter.

Categories such as refugees and internally displaced persons, single pensioners, the disabled, single mothers and large families, as well as children, will again be the hardest hit during the cold months, although most of the general population in all four countries are affected to some extent by economic hardship in the difficult period of transition to a market economy. The Governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have increased the prices of subsidized items such as bread, gas and electricity with a view to eventually freeing them to market forces. Pensions and other social benefits, as well as state salaries, have been somewhat increased to accompany these measures, but vulnerable groups remain partially dependent on relief aid. Incomes in general are persistently low. The lack of fuel and cash are major obstacles to improvements in agricultural production and other sectors of the respective economies. In Tajikistan, the economic situation has become disastrous, and the country has been experiencing acute shortages of wheat for bread throughout the latter part of 1994.

The perspective of increased logistical difficulties and added emergency needs during the winter months has prompted intense inter-agency coordination activity in all four countries since August. DHA Field Coordination Units, which were established between July and early September 1994 in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan to support the respective DHA Coordinators, have been actively engaged in encouraging and building upon these coordination mechanisms as well as planning with their partners for improved emergency information management. In September, DHA organised in-country consultations to plan for the period until the end of the ongoing Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Caucasus, which runs until 31 March 1995, and to exchange views on the general directions in which the humanitarian effort should move in the coming year. These consultations involved UN agencies and programmes, Government representatives, NGOs and other international and national partners. DHA organised a similar exercise in Tajikistan, where the ongoing Appeal runs until 31 December 1994. Further consultations were held with humanitarian partners during the visit of a DHA-led mission in October for the preparation of the 12-month Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Tajikistan starting on 1 January 1995.

In an informal consultation in Geneva on 13 October, DHA briefed the donor community on the progress of humanitarian activities, the shortfalls for the remaining months of the respective Appeals and the outcome of the September in-country discussions. Donors were alerted particularly to outstanding requirements in areas such as health, logistics and food.

CAUCASUS

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

The cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh in effect since 12 May 1994 is still holding, and the deployment of peace-keeping troops or monitors in this area is under discussion. Exchange of women and children prisoners of war has started. In Georgia, where a cease-fire is also in effect, discussions are ongoing for the organised return of 20,000 to 30,000 displaced persons to the Gali region in Abkhazia under the Quadripartite Agreement, signed by Abkhazia, Georgia, Russia and UNHCR. There is widespread hope among the populations of the three countries that the conflicts affecting the Caucasus will be resolved, especially in view of their severe toll on their respective economies.

During the DHA sponsored inter-agency consultations in September, it was agreed that continued assistance in the form of food, shelter, basic health, kerosene and clothing would remain an essential component of humanitarian contributions in the Caucasus in the coming months and next year. Emergency logistics, which are part of WFP's regional activities, are in dire need of funding to overcome the tremendous transport constraints which prevail throughout the Caucasus. At the same time, humanitarian partners stressed that a number of creative approaches need to be expanded or initiated in order to bridge the gaps between relief assistance and longer-term, sustainable development. Community-level action in the area of income-generation, training, self-help health projects and advice in marketing procedures for village productive units were considered vital elements to reduce dependency on free hand-outs, while larger-scale economic reforms are being thought out by respective Governments, in collaboration with international financial institutions, at national levels.

Income-generating and food for work projects have already been initiated during 1994 by UNHCR and WFP with NGO implementing partners or are being planned by UN Agencies such as UNDP. In the sector of health, emergency needs remain the core concern of the humanitarian community, but health policies and other longer-term issues are also being addressed in parallel by UNICEF and WHO. NGOs have started planning for increased involvement in community level health education. Meanwhile, refugees and internally displaced persons remain a central concern in all three countries. Efforts will continue to enable these groups to return home and to design projects benefiting host communities and resident populations as well. UNHCR is planning for expanded involvement in activities for the provision of permanent shelter. Education, though largely under-funded during the past year, is also viewed as requiring increased attention. Humanitarian partners also called for increased information sharing between agencies and the Government, especially to determine levels of vulnerability.

Since the consultations held in September, DHA has continued coordination efforts with agencies operating in the three countries, as well as liaison with Government counterparts. In Armenia, further insight into possible directions for humanitarian assistance was provided through a DHA-sponsored seminar open to all humanitarian partners and Government representatives, during which members of the intellectual community of Armenia presented their views on possibilities for intervention in the education sector and in developing technical expertise in-country. In Azerbaijan, agencies have continued exchanging information on ongoing and planned emergency efforts in view of the winter. In Georgia, discussions have also focused on the proposed development of a mine database through DHA, UNHCR and UNDP efforts. All three Field Coordination Units also supported the respective DHA Coordinators in preparing for the visit of the UN Secretary-General to the Caucasus at the beginning of November.

By mid-October, contributions received against the ongoing Appeal for the Caucasus totalled 48.8 percent of the requirements for Armenia, 52.3 percent for Azerbaijan, 32 percent for Georgia and 28.8 percent for regional activities. At the beginning of November, DHA issued the "Revised Strategy for the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, 1994/1995", reflecting the outcome of the September inter-agency consultations in these countries as well as inputs from UN Agency Headquarters.

Tajikistan

More than 90% of former refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the 1992-1993 civil conflict have returned to their home areas, reflecting significant stabilisation in the Khatlon region in southern Tajikistan. UN efforts for national reconciliation achieved important progress in September when a cease-fire was agreed between the Government and the opposition. The agreement, first intended to last until the day before the presidential elections of 6 November, was subsequently extended to 6 February 1995.

Despite several encouraging signs of stabilisation, Tajikistan, the poorest of the former Soviet Republics, has suffered a drastic deterioration in its economy

during 1994. The country is experiencing a severe lack of fuel, cereals and basic medecines while encountering increased difficulties to obtain credit for imports. Wheat stocks were all but depleted, which prompted FAO to issue a Special Alert on the Food Supply Situation in Tajikistan.

The Alert followed the visit of a DHA-led mission to the country from 16 to 22 October, which included representation of FAO. The mission reviewed the humanitarian situation and continued the preparatory work initiated in-country for next year's Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for Tajikistan from 1 January to 31 December 1995. With the assistance of the DHA Coordinator and Field Coordination Unit, the DHA mission held extensive consultations with the UN and NGO community to prepare the proposals for humanitarian activities in the coming year. The mission was also briefed on the general situation in the country and its impact on humanitarian needs in meetings with the Chairman of the Commission on Humanitarian Affairs as well as various ministries.

By the end of October 1994, nearly 80% of the emergency food aid requirements under the Inter-Agency Appeal had been met, reflecting strong donor response. WFP has coordinated food assistance with the other partners involved in food deliveries, including IFRC, ICRC and NGOs such as CARE, SCF-US, Mercy Corps International and German Agro-Action. In other sectors, funding has been less forthcoming. Part of the donor contributions have also been affected by transport delays, and some activities experienced a slow start due to various constraints. Overall, about 60% of the Appeal requirements are expected to be met by the end of 1994. Following consultations held during the DHA mission in October, UN agencies have taken steps to speed up implementation of health and water/sanitation activities in collaboration with NGO partners. UNHCR, for its part, expects to complete repair or reconstruction of 13,200 shelters for returnees by the end of 1994 and plans to phase out its material aid activities by mid-1995, subject to the return of refugees from Afghanistan, continued stability of the security situation and provided the linkages to related programmes of other agencies and longer-term activities are established.

As maintaining stability in conflict-affected areas remains a major concern of the humanitarian effort, peace- and confidence-building programmes will play an increasingly important role in the future, complementing UNHCR's protection activities for the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons. Humanitarian activities such as UNHCR quick-impact projects, aiming at household income generation, are also assisting conflict-affected populations to cope with the consequences of war as well as general economic difficulties. These activities are essential components to move from relief assistance to longer-term interventions and will be expanded in future. Discussions are ongoing with UNDP and UNV for a gradual transfer of management of the projects in 1995. However, UN Agencies and NGOs are increasingly witnessing the onset of wider-ranging, economic-related needs in Tajikistan, different both in scope and nature from the needs which arose as a result of the armed conflict. They are far beyond the sphere of intervention of current humanitarian efforts in Tajikistan. Assessments of and response to these needs will require increased involvement on the part of development-oriented agencies.

Disaster Mitigation and Management Planning

Africa: Sub-Regional Workshop on Natural Disaster Reduction: DHA has received the formal agreement of the Government of Botswana to be the host of the first sub-regional workshop from 28 November to 2 December. It will be dedicated to SADC Member States, the Republics of Mauritius and the Seychelles. Several UN specialized agencies will participate. Plenary and small group sessions will discuss problems faced by countries in the sub-region seeking to reduce their vulnerability to disasters, while simultaneously pursuing development objectives.

Argentina: A staff member of the Disaster Mitigation Branch was in Argentina from 19 to 24 October to review the ongoing DHA Disaster Mitigation Project in the country and set up the relevant Work Plan and Budget for 1995. The 1994 activities focused on hazard and risk assessment of the Peteroa Volcano as well as on technological risk reduction activities in the Campana - Zarate area. DHA also closely cooperated with the UNEP IE Office in Paris, to prepare the National **APELL** Workshop to be held in 1995.

Chile: Further to the request of the Government, a staff member of the Disaster Mitigation Branch carried out a mission to Chile from 25 October to 2 November. He assisted the National Emergency Office to review and update the ongoing project **"Strengthening of the National Civil Protection System"** and to update the Work Plan of the **"DHA Volcanic Risk Reduction Project"**. He was invited by the Governor of the 10th Region to evaluate the volcanic hazards represented by the volcanoes Osorno and Calbuco. He also took part in the international seminar **"Disaster Management in Big Cities"**, held in Santiago de Chile from 26 to 28 October.

Ecuador Regional Office Quito: The DHA Regional Disaster Mitigation Advisor for Latin America, based in Quito, carried out a mission to Peru from 17 to 26 October in order to review progress achieved within the framework of the DHA Disaster Mitigation Project in Peru and to participate in the Fifth General Meeting of **"La Red - de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres para America Latina"**.

Guinea: At the request of the Government, a DMB staff member will undertake a mission of ten days to Guinea in order to finalize the National Disaster Management Plan drafted by a team of three national consultants. The delegate will also participate in a Round Table on the theme **"Vers une Stratégie de Gestion des Catatrophes en Guinée"**.

Kazakhstan: DHA has received a request from the State Commission on Emergency Situations and Relief of the Republic of Kazakhstan to provide technical assistance with the organization of the International Training Centre for Seismology and Seismo-Resistant Construction. The project, considered a priority by the Government, includes the acquisition of a shaking table for simulation exercises.

Malawi: National Disaster Management Plan: An exploratory mission by a DHA consultant was completed in September. The ensuing draft report provided the substance for a joint review by the Government of Malawi and staff of the Disaster Mitigation Branch in October. This led to a decision to use national expertise to review current disaster legislation, management and practice and to develop a national development strategy, plan and programme for the prevailing hazard types in Malawi.

A team of 20 Malawian and resident non-Malawian researchers of the University of Malawi and other institutions is examining pest, geological, hydrological, climatic and epidemiological hazards. It will propose an appropriate strategy, management plan and implementing structure for each hazard type, covering prevention, preparedness and response. The draft plan is expected to be the subject of regional and national discussion before it is finalised.

Moldova: At the request of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, DHA, in cooperation with UNDP, sent a consultant on a three-week mission to assess consequences of recent natural disasters in the country, and to prepare a draft project document for technical assistance aiming at strengthening the disaster relief and mitigation capacity at country level. The project may establish a module for disaster reduction in other countries of the region.

Nepal: DHA completed a dam break study for the Kulekhani dam situated some 100 km from Kathmandu. This study was undertaken to strengthen disaster preparedness and relief capacity at the national and community levels. The DHA project officer will shortly carry out a mission to discuss, with the national authorities concerned, the study's findings and to plan follow-up activities.

Russia: The Ministry for Emergency Situations, Relief, Civil Defence and Coordination has agreed to cooperate with DHA in organising an International Academy for Relief, Civil Protection and Co-ordination, to provide training for technical personnel from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and countries of the region in disaster relief and management of emergencies caused by natural and industrial disasters. Details are expected to be discussed during the next meeting of the Inter-State Council of the CIS in November in Minsk (Belorus), in which DHA is due to participate.

Slovenia: A staff member of the Disaster Mitigation Branch participated in the **"International Conference of the countries of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the area of protection against natural and other disasters"** from 4 to 8 October. The Conference was attended by 80 representatives from 17 countries. They endorsed the need to reach regional agreement on coordinated assistance in the event of natural and technological disasters under the auspices of relevant UN bodies.

South Africa: In response to an invitation, a paper, entitled "Disaster Management: An International Perspective", was presented at the Conference of the South African IDNDR Committee on 12 October, IDNDR Day. The gathering also offered an opportunity to inform participants about the work of DHA and UN specialized agencies in disaster reduction.

Venezuela: In response to a request to DHA by the Government of Venezuela, the Disaster Mitigation Desk Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean region undertook a mission to Venezuela from 21 November to 1 December. He assisted the national authorities in evaluating disaster reduction needs in the preparation of PRODOC for the Disaster Mitigation Project. He also delivered two lectures during the **"Disaster Management Workshop for High Officials"** held in Cumaná from 24 to 26 November.

Uruguay: At the request of the Government, the Disaster Mitigation Desk Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean region visited Montevideo on 20 October. He assisted the Presidency of the Republic of Uruguay, the National Directorate of Meteorology and the UNDP/Montevideo Office in assessing the most pressing disaster reduction needs. A common strategy to formulate a comprehensive Disaster Mitigation Project for Uruguay was agreed upon.

Viet Nam: DHA is taking part in the preparation of an international consultation meeting called by the Government of Viet Nam to facilitate the adoption of the **"Strategy and Action Plan for Mitigating Water Disasters in Viet Nam"** set up by national experts with DHA and UNDP involvement. The proposed action plan comprises priority projects covering the whole range of the country's water problems. The document will be presented to potential donors.

South Pacific Regional Disaster Reduction Meeting: The Third IDNDR Pacific Regional Disaster Reduction Meeting was held from 6 to 14 September at the Forum Secretariat Conference Centre in Suva, Fiji. The meeting was attended by participants from thirteen Pacific island countries and territories, four regional organizations and a wide range of donor countries, UN agencies and resource persons. The primary objective of the meeting was to further cooperation in disaster management in the Pacific region.

The meeting was organized by DHA's South Pacific Programme Office, Forum Secretariat and Emergency Management Australia (EMA). Funding was provided by UNDP through the South Pacific Disaster Reduction Project and IDNDR Australia. A second objective of the meeting was to discuss a wide range of disaster mitigation projects and review their applicability in the region. This session was co-organized and co-funded by the World Seismic Safety Initiative.

The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions on the improvement of disaster management in the region and to discuss and review a wide range of disaster mitigation activities and projects.

One major outcome of the meeting was a proposal for coordination of disaster management in the region. The meeting also approved the work programme for the South Pacific Disaster Reduction Project, which is implemented by DHA's South Pacific Programme Office.

South Pacific Disaster Reduction Project: Staff of DHA's South Pacific Programme Office undertook missions in six Pacific island countries from October to December: Cook Islands, Palau, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. These visits aimed at helping to identify and implement disaster reduction programmes. Activities included reviewing and revising disaster management plans, identifying and implementing pilot projects, disaster management training workshops and promoting disaster mitigation activities. The visits were part of the South Pacific Disaster Reduction Project, which is implemented by the South Pacific Programme Office and funded by UNDP and other donors.

MCDA Project : Action Plan 1995

The MCDA project is being executed in response to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 which founded DHA and which requested the Department, *inter-alia*, to develop appropriate arrangements with interested Governments and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to ensure expeditious access, when necessary, to their emergency relief capacities, including food reserves, emergency stockpiles, personnel and logistic support.

This project, initiated at the request of the NERS IV meeting in October 1991, forms an integral part of DHA's response system to emergencies along with other operational tools such as UNDAC and OSOCC. It has been implemented so far thanks to the support of many Governments and international, regional and non-governmental organizations. To date, more than US$ 2 million have been invested in the development of the MCDA conceptual phase, which has led to the publication of the **Oslo Guidelines** applicable to relief operations, notably in times of peace.

DHA is now further expanding the MCDA project in accordance with the recommendations of the Oslo Conference and following the indications contained in the Report, dated 21 June 1994, of the UN Secretary-General to the 49th session of the General Assembly on the strengthening of the coordination of UN emergency humanitarian assistance. At the completion of the conceptual stage, which focused on relief operations in times of peace, the programme is now entering a new phase of implementation. This will entail, among other things, the application of the programme whenever military force is used in a humanitarian context.

In 1995 the MCDA secretariat intends to carry out, *inter-alia*, the following activities with the support of and in coordination with participating States and organizations:

■ Provide continued support to Member States in further enhancing their capacity to cope with the effects of major sudden emergencies using their national assets and by providing, through the Oslo Guidelines, a framework for improved international cooperation. This includes coordination in the use of MCDA in real emergencies, as well as the organization of and/or participation in relevant meetings, *ad hoc* seminars and practical exercises;

■ Establish a Network of Networks to promote multinational institutions (eg. EU, NATO, NACC, WEU, CSCE and IADB), produce an agreed calendar and generate synergy with other international initiatives such as Partnership for Peace, the US PDD-25 document, the Italian proposal to the G7 and the recently formed Franco-British Euro-Air Group;

■ Finalize the MCDA Register and negotiate on a bilateral basis, with each interested country, the access to their resources and the modalities for their employment;

■ Complete, in the framework of DHA's overall training strategy and objectives, the development of MCDA training modules, including educational material, and organize courses for MCDA unit commanders and team leaders;

■ Further develop MCDA standing operating procedures to include wider humanitarian missions. Finalize and distribute the MCDA Field Operations Handbook;

■ In addition to the scheduled activities of the MCDA Standing Coordinating Group, organize a two-day Round Table on Military Support for Humanitarian Operations;

Astrakhan - Field Exercise

In September, EMERCOM of Russia hosted a large-scale exercise in Astrakhan, near the Caspian Sea. The exercise was an important step in the DHA project on the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in disaster relief. A relief team from the Austrian Forces Disaster Relief Unit worked together with Russian military, civil protection, and fire brigade units to rescue "victims" from a simulated accident in a large chemical plant. The latest techniques were demonstrated in the extinction of chemical fires, damage control and repair of leaking gas pipelines on land and under the water, as well as the warning, protection and evacuation of civilians near the chemical plant. Observers from more than 20 countries and international organizations attended the exercise.

■ Expand the activities of the MCDA project to encompass all national structures with similar operating mechanisms relevant to the scope of the programme;

■ Sponsor and participate in the organization of international, realistic field or command post exercises, as done in Austria in 1993, in Russia in 1994 and scheduled for 1995 in Lithuania in cooperation with the US European Command;

■ Establish an MCDA operative fund to allow timely and adequate response by national teams requiring external logistics support (e.g. airlift);

■ Call on and coordinate the possible support the private sector, involved in "MCDA" systems, can provide in further enhancing the Department's capacity to deal with new and more complex emergencies.

Much has been accomplished during the first three years of the Project and its relevance has been well tested and proven in field conditions during real humanitarian missions. Different aspects of the MCDA system were already applied in connection with recent natural disasters and/or complex emergencies in Algeria, Egypt, Georgia, Montenegro, Moldova, Tajikistan and Rwanda.

Information and Communications

United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) In-Country Experts In Latin America: DHA has established the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team, consisting of emergency management experts who can leave within hours of a disaster to work with local authorities in carrying out assessment and co-ordination at a disaster site.

In light of the experience gained from the first year of UNDAC operations, DHA has decided to expand participation in the UNDAC system.

This will be done through an increase in the number of members in the international UNDAC cadre (at present 24 from eight countries) as well as through the establishment of a new cadre of "UNDAC in-country experts", in order to take full advantage of local assessment capacities and expertise. A pilot project is taking place in Latin America, with a view to promoting regional cooperation in disaster management.

In November, a two-member DHA mission consisting of a Relief Coordination Branch officer and an UNDAC consultant, visited six Latin American countries (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru), in order to consult with the respective Governments and United Nations Resident Co-ordinators on the tasks and modalities of use of the UNDAC in-country experts, and to interview potential candidates as well as identify training and financial requirements.

The UNDAC Refresher Training Course took place in Morges, Switzerland, from 5 to 9 October. The yearly refresher training is foreseen in the arrangement with each of the eight governments participating with members in the UNDAC Team (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom). Twenty UNDAC team members took part. In addition, a group of DHA staff members were able to familiarize themselves with the work of the team and with the systems and procedures that have been developed to alert and mobilize the team. The course covered a review of the missions carried out during the year, discussions on future activities of the team, including possible participation in complex emergency situations, and practical aspects such as mobilization and equipment. There were also in-depth discussions on coordination and assessment issues. The team spirit and good working relations between members, established at the first training course in 1993, were further strengthened.

INSARAG: As part of DHA cooperation with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), a DHA representative presented a paper on the coordination of international disaster response teams at the international "Firesafety Frontier 94" conference, held in Tokyo between 18 and 21 October. The conference was attended by managers of fire and rescue services, the first line responders in any disaster response, from all over the world. They discussed international cooperation in a workshop on urbanization and large-scale disasters. Copies of the paper presented by DHA can be obtained upon request from the DHA publications unit, Geneva.

OSOCC. In a follow-up to the use of Swedish resources in support of the DHA On-site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) established in Kigali at the height of the Rwanda emergency, DHA staff met with representatives of the Swedish Government in Stockholm on 16 and 17 November, to discuss the development of support modules for field coordination.

Register of Emergency Stockpiles: The second, upgraded version of the Register of Emergency Stockpiles was presented and distributed to the participants of the 1994 Meeting on Emergency Stockpiles held on 11 and 12 October in Pisa, Italy.

The meeting was informed that the Register containing data on 51 emergency stockpiles existed in the form of both a computer database and a loose-leaf publication. It is available on the United Nations International Emergency Network (UNIENET).

The participants welcomed the establishment of the Register. However they considered it necessary to caution potential users against abusing the Register and not to consider it as a source of a guaranteed supply of disaster relief items. It was underlined that the emergency stockpiles had been created and were to be utilized primarily within the framework of the mandate of the respective stockpile holders. Another warning note addressed to users concerned requests for medicines and medical supplies: users were recommended to exercise extreme care in lodging their requests for these items.

The Register is being distributed by DHA only to emergency stockpile holders, recognized international and national relief organizations and, through DHA/UNDP Resident Representatives, to governmental disaster management focal points. DHA has undertaken to send out timely updates of the Register to those users who make known to DHA the name

and contact data of the person responsible for the maintenance of their copy of the Register.

1994 Meeting on Emergency Stockpiles: The 1994 Meeting on Emergency Stockpiles was held on 11 and 12 October in Pisa, Italy. It was attended by 44 delegates representing Governments or governmental organizations of nine countries, six United Nations Agencies, two inter-governmental and two non-governmental organizations.

The meeting was organized by DHA in accordance with the agreement reached at the first Workshop on Emergency Stockpiles (Workshop-93) held on 4 and 5 March 1993 in Geneva, Switzerland, and following consultations with interested governments, United Nations agencies and other organizations.

Workshop-94, chaired by Mr P. Burton of OFDA (United Kingdom), considered and approved the results of the follow-up work to Workshop-93, in particular the establishment of the Register of Emergency Stockpiles. It also discussed and agreed ways and means to further improve the operational capacity of existing emergency stockpiles in line with United Nations General Assembly resolutions 46/182/, 47/168 and 48/57.

Workshop-94 found the results of DHA inquiries on existing (and largely neglected) facilitation measures in customs and international transport conventions very useful and welcomed the prospect of further clarification on this, including with UNCTAD among others, and the readiness of the CCC to cooperate with DHA in pursuing the matter of facilitation measures in customs further with the Governments.

Cairo: The Chief of the Relief Coordination Branch participated in September in the Third Regional Acting of the Federation of World Volunteer Firefighters Association of Europe and Africa. The purpose was to exchange views on policy and technical matters in order to improve response to natural disasters.

Yemen: Following the appeal which was issued by DHA for **Yemen** after the armed conflict which occurred in May 1994, two consultants were sent to this country to follow up the development of the situation and the use of the contributions of various donors.

The **Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** in Kyoto, Japan, in September/October adopted Resolution COM 4/14 on "The Use of Telecommunications for Disaster Mitigation and Disaster Relief Operations", drafted in close collaboration with DHA and proposed by the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. The resolution endorses Resolution 7 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, Buenos Aires 1994, and calls upon DHA to implement the action defined in paragraphs 12 and 15 of the 1991 "Tampere Declaration of Experts on Disaster Communications".

DHA participated in the **25th Annual Conference of the International Institute of Communications (IIC)** in Tampere, Finland, in September with a presentation on the regulatory implications of the use of telecommunications equipment in international humanitarian assistance. The conference was opened by the Secretary-General of the ITU and the support of the representatives of national telecommunications authorities gained during the conference provided the basis for the unanimous adoption of the Use of Telecommunications for Disaster Mitigation and Disaster Relief Operations in the Plenipotentiary Conference of the ITU.

At the **Media Flows Research Symposium** at the University of Tampere, Finland, in September, DHA made a presentation on the interaction between the media and international humanitarian assistance. In a first follow-up on this symposium, ways for DHA and, in particular, its new Emergency Operations Room in Geneva to benefit from real-time information systems and news processing technologies used by the media are being evaluated further.

The **Working Group on Telecommunications Equipment** of the Inter-Agency Procurement Office in Copenhagen completed its work on the standardization of equipment for field telecommunications. In view of the importance of compatibility of communications not only among humanitarian institutions but with advanced data processing systems being introduced, DHA has continuously played an active role in this working group and was represented at the October meeting by the consultant of the DHA project on Emergency Telecommunications with and in the field.

At the **45th International Astronautical Congress** of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) in Jerusalem in October, the representative of DHA presented a paper on the use of satellite telecommunications for disaster relief operations. Other specialized sessions of the congress considered ways to increase use of space technology such as satellite imagery for disaster mitigation, and to provide real-time satellite information in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. The use of low-cost technology and

affordable access to information from surveillance satellites was the topic of several presentations. DHA was invited to accept the vice-chairmanship of the IAF Committee on Space and Natural Disaster Reduction.

The Humanitarian Liaison Working Group met in Geneva on 21 November to discuss Military Support for Humanitarian Operations. Gen. Schroeder of the US Army and the Director General of the Swedish Rescue Service Agency were invited as guest speakers. The meeting, chaired by the US Ambassador, was attended by representatives of the Western Group, the Russian Ambassador and humanitarian agencies. Participants indicated their interest in the topic and referred frequently to DHA's project on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) in Disaster Relief and to the Oslo Conference in terms of basic criteria and operational requirements. Wide support was given to DHA's leading role in this field and DHA was requested to expand the scope of the MCDA project to also address complex emergencies and humanitarian missions.

Confronting Disasters in Local Authorities was the title of an international conference of the European Section of the International Union of Local Authorities organized in Tel Aviv by the Union of Local Authorities in Israel in October 1994. In his address to the opening session of the conference, the representative of DHA emphasized the importance of the role of local authorities in disaster response: any national, regional or international assistance can only support the initial actions taken through locally established mechanisms. The conference decided to establish an advisory board on disaster preparedness at local authority level and invited DHA to join this board as a permanent member.

In October, DHA wrote to more than 100 disaster- and complex emergencies-related libraries and documentation centres to develop and/or improve the exchange of new documents, books, reports and other publications. A database, available electronically, with basic information on each library/centre was also envisaged, and a form to be completed by each library/centre was enclosed. In addition, as a first step towards promoting the exchange of publications, the 1994 DHA Disaster Management Directory was attached. DHA hopes that all libraries and documentation centres will benefit from this regular exchange. Those who did not receive the letter but wish to be included in the database should contact:

DHA Documentation Centre,
Room 28-3, Palais des Nations,
Ext.: 72139 or tel.: direct: 022/9172139.

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs enters the Internet era with the Humanitarian Crisis Web (HCWEB) Network

One of the main objectives of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is to be the focal point for a comprehensive information system to ensure effective information exchange to support all phases of disaster coordination. To achieve this, DHA has implemented an electronic public information repository using Internet as the primary communication infrastructure and the Gopher/World Wide Web/Mosaic suite of standard information management tools. Consequently, DHA is now maintaining the HCWEB on Internet.

HCWEB is a disaster-specific electronic information network providing the international disaster management community with access to disaster-related information. HCWEB is basically an enlarged and amended version of the United Nations International Emergency Network (UNIENET) made available on Internet. Connection to HCWEB can be made via Internet using telnet:

gopher.unicc.org

HCWEB will guide the user through information related to the management of complex emergencies and natural disasters. The facilities of the system include: General Country Information, Complex Emergencies, Sudden Natural Disasters and Others, Emergency Response Directories, Training Programmes, Early Warning Issues, Environmental Issues, Relief Logistics, Information on the United Nations and agencies active in emergency management.

For further information,
please do not hesitate to contact us
DHA - Geneva; E-mail: Internet
dhagva@UN.org

National Emergency Commission of Costa Rica Receives SASAKAWA/DHA Disaster Prevention Award

DHA Under-Secretary-General Mr. Peter Hansen (left) and Mr. Jorge Manuel Dengo at the Award ceremony.

The Eighth Sasakawa/DHA Disaster Prevention Award went to the National Emergency Commission of Costa Rica. The main purpose of the Award is to promote humanitarian efforts to assist those affected by natural disasters as well as those living in high-risk zones, struggling for survival against natural adversities.

The National Emergency Commission was selected from among sixteen candidates as the 1994 Laureate for the Sasakawa DHA Disaster Prevention Award in recognition of its remarkable contribution to disaster prevention and preparedness.

1994 Sasakawa Award Ceremony, at the Palais des Nations, Geneva

The Award was handed to Mr. Jorge Manuel Dengo, President of the National Emergency Commission.

The Jury took into consideration the fact that the National Emergency Commission had implemented numerous innovative activities at the national level and participated in various regional and international forums a on hazard evaluation, prevention, preparedness response, recovery and reconstruction. The Jury was also impressed by the fact that the activities of the Commission had systematically integrated the complete chain of disaster mitigation needs from hazard and risk assessment to logistics planning and public information.

In the area of technological innovation, the Commission developed the "Atlas Cantonal de Amenazas" which is a compilation of computerized information about natural hazards, geographic characteristics and infrastructure. This "Atlas Cantonal" uses two basic technologies: The Computer Aided Design (CAD) and the Geographic Information System (GIS). In addition, the Commission promoted various scientific activities contributing to the strengthening of disaster prevention and preparedness like the "Plan de Vigilancia de Cuencas" (Flood Basin Surveillance Plan), destined to improve the relationship between hydrometeorological institutions to diminish flood and avalanche hazards.

In the opinion of the Jury, the achievements and research of the Commission included a number of original and very useful applications of modern technology to disaster mitigation, as well as involvement in the socio-economic aspects of disaster reduction. They provide the best example of the type of activities which the Sasakawa/DHA Disaster Prevention Award is intended to encourage.

The Award, which carries a prize of US $40,000, was created in 1986 and endowed by Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa, Chairman of the SASAKAWA Foundation.

DMTP Corner

Disaster Management Training Programme

The series of country workshops scheduled for the first phase of the DMTP has been completed with those in Sri Lanka,Tanzania and Zanzibar.

Important event

■ With the first, and very successful, phase of the DMTP coming to an end, an in-depth evaluation of the project has been commissioned. Two independent consultants have been recruited to assess, amongst other issues, the catalytic role of DMTP, the sustainability of the results of the Programme, the impact on capacity-building, the impact on target groups, the organization of management, major problems and constraints, regional specificities, the level of commitment to the Programme by those involved in disaster management, the effectiveness of training methodology, and future activities and orientation of the Programme.

Dr. John Rogge of the Disaster Research Institute at the University of Manitoba (Canada) and Dr. Allan Lavell, Director of the Disaster Management Programme at the University of San José (Costa Rica), will be undertaking a number of visits to selected field offices where DMTP national workshops have been held, in order to meet with the relevant in-country UN, government and other officials. The final report of this evaluation is expected for mid-December.

Looking ahead with DMTP

■ For the past four years, the DMTP has contributed to strengthening capacities at the national as well as the international level. It is now at an important stage as we move towards the 21st century with its host of new challenges calling for imaginative and innovative approaches, as well as renewed determination. In order to respond to these challenges, the new era of the DMTP has been designed with an orientation and expertise to address the needs of the next five years. This new Programme reflects broader activities and will provide a system-wide framework for emergency and disaster capacity-building with a focus on a full cycle of action, ranging from preparedness and mitigation, through relief, to recovery and rehabilitation. The Programme will increasingly seek to work together with UN agencies and disaster-prone countries to forge genuine capacity building in as concerted and cost-effective a manner as possible.

The final proposal on the second phase of the DMTP - at present **referred to as DMTP II** - will be submitted to a formal donors' meeting in November.This proposal contains most of the suggestions made during the June donors' consultation, as well as budget covering the three-year period January 1995 to December 1997.

The revised proposal was also the main topic of the fourth inter-agency consultation held in October at which it was recalled that the DMTP wished to establish avenues of ongoing communication with agencies on both the design and implementation of DMTP. Although many might have seen the DMTP designed initially as a training programme, it should increasingly be seen as part of an overall process of support through technical cooperation and strategic planning. It should also be related to agencies' regular training programmes in emergency management and should seek to eliminate unnecessary gaps and overlaps in programme design and delivery.

The question of closer involvement of agencies in the planning of DMTP activities was raised: under such circumstances, the possibility of both financial and human resources being made available by agencies was also mentioned. Cooperation with the core group of UN agencies involved in DMTP will not only continue during DMTP II but will also be expanded by establishing consultative and advisory relationships with a larger number of UN agencies.

Specific interests of DMTP II

■ One of the areas in which activities are already envisaged under DMTP II is the ex-Soviet Union. Since the break up of the USSR in 1991, the joint management of the DMTP had been observing the Newly Independent States to determine if they should benefit from DMTP activities, but it was not possible during the first phase to address the urgent problems confronting many of the countries in this region. A preliminary approach will now be made in the form of an assessment mission to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in order to prepare a strategy to respond to the needs of these regions to improve/develop their disaster-management capacities.

Special note

■ The DMTP is pleased to announce the following direct telephone numbers: (41-22) 7881413; 7888214; 7888217 and fax number (41-22) 7888221.

Recent Publications

From disaster management to sustainable development: How the public sector, private sector and voluntary organizations can work together

Available in English only

This 99-page book, part of WHO's contribution to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), brings together papers from world leaders and innovators in disaster management and development. As part of its mandate as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work, WHO expresses alarm at the impact disasters can have on development and a range of health issues, from behavioural disorders to nutritional deficiencies. WHO therefore looks to the IDNDR process to provide a coordinating framework for disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness, and was a major supporter of the Yokohama Conference, at which these papers were first presented.

Humanitarian action in times of war: a handbook for practitioners

Available in English only from DHA
(Also published in French, Spanish)

DHA has a limited supply of this 100-page book by Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, which aims "to distil collective lessons from diverse experiences around the world...(which are) presented as creative approaches that may be adapted to other circumstances". The authors, co-directors of the Humanitarianism and War Project sponsored by Brown University and the Refugee Policy Group, work to bring together theory and practice and see this handbook as part of the ongoing effort to link conceptual analysis of humanitarian issues with practical recommendations to improve humanitarian programmes.

Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief

Available in English, French, Spanish

In pursuance of United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/182, DHA is developing appropriate arrangements with interested Governments and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure speedy access, when necessary, to their emergency relief capacities, including food reserves, emergency stockpiles, personnel and logistic support. The aim of the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief is to establish the basic framework for formalizing and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of disaster relief operations in the light of increasing demand for international assistance.

United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC)

Available in English, French, Spanish

To meet the need for qualified information on the situation at a disaster site and, when necessary, to help the local emergency management authority of a country affected by a sudden-onset disaster in coordinating the work of international relief teams, DHA has established the UNDAC Team. This short publication is a brief guide to relief coordination tools and mechanisms.

Study on Emergency Stockpiles

Available in English

This study is an analysis of ways and means to improve the operational capacity of emergency stockpiles. Existing emergency stockpiles can be improved *inter alia* through an increased awareness of each other's capacities, cooperation in the procurement, storage and delivery of relief items on a cost-sharing basis, the development and use of packaging adapted to relief operations, and the application of simplified customs and other procedures for moving relief shipments.

Facilitation measures in customs conventions

Available in English

DHA has conducted a number of meetings and consultations with interested national and international organizations to consider proposals for improving arrangements between the United Nations and interested Governments and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure more expeditious emergency humani-tarian assistance.

DHA Pisa Warehouse

Available in English, French, Spanish, Italian

A pocket-sized guide to the facilities provided at DHA's warehouse in Pisa, Italy.

Kulekhani Dam Break Study

Available in English only

The hundreds of large and small dams in the world are all potential hazards because of the catastrophic floods which can result from dam breaks. This report reviews possible dam break scenarios for a particular dam, Kulekhani in Nepal, and calculates the impact of the hypothetical failure on the population and infra-structure downstream of the dam.

Strategy and action plan for mitigating water disasters in Viet Nam

Available in English only

Viet Nam has one of the most abundant water resources in the world. However this abundance also makes water disasters the most serious of all events affecting the country. Each year in Viet Nam a large part of the infrastructure is made inoperable, hundreds of people are killed and millions of dollars of property and crops are damaged or lost. More than 70 per cent of the population of Viet Nam is at risk from water disasters. This strategy and action plan aims to address the most pressing problems of water disasters in Viet Nam today: river floods, flash floods, flooding from the sea, increased run-off, erosion and silting of river beds, slope instability, mud flows and landslides, torrential rains in combination with strong winds, failures of water-retaining structures and seawater intrusion into ground water.

United Nations Consolidated Appeals (DHA)

- Revised strategy for the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, 1994-1995.

- United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Tajikistan, 1 January - 31 December 1995.

- Haïti : programme d'urgence pour le soulagement de la pauvreté : transition entre assistance humanitaire et programme de reconstruction, 1 décembre 1994 - 31 mai 1995.

- United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia, 1 January - 30 June 1995.

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